Marxism Today

September 1987 95p

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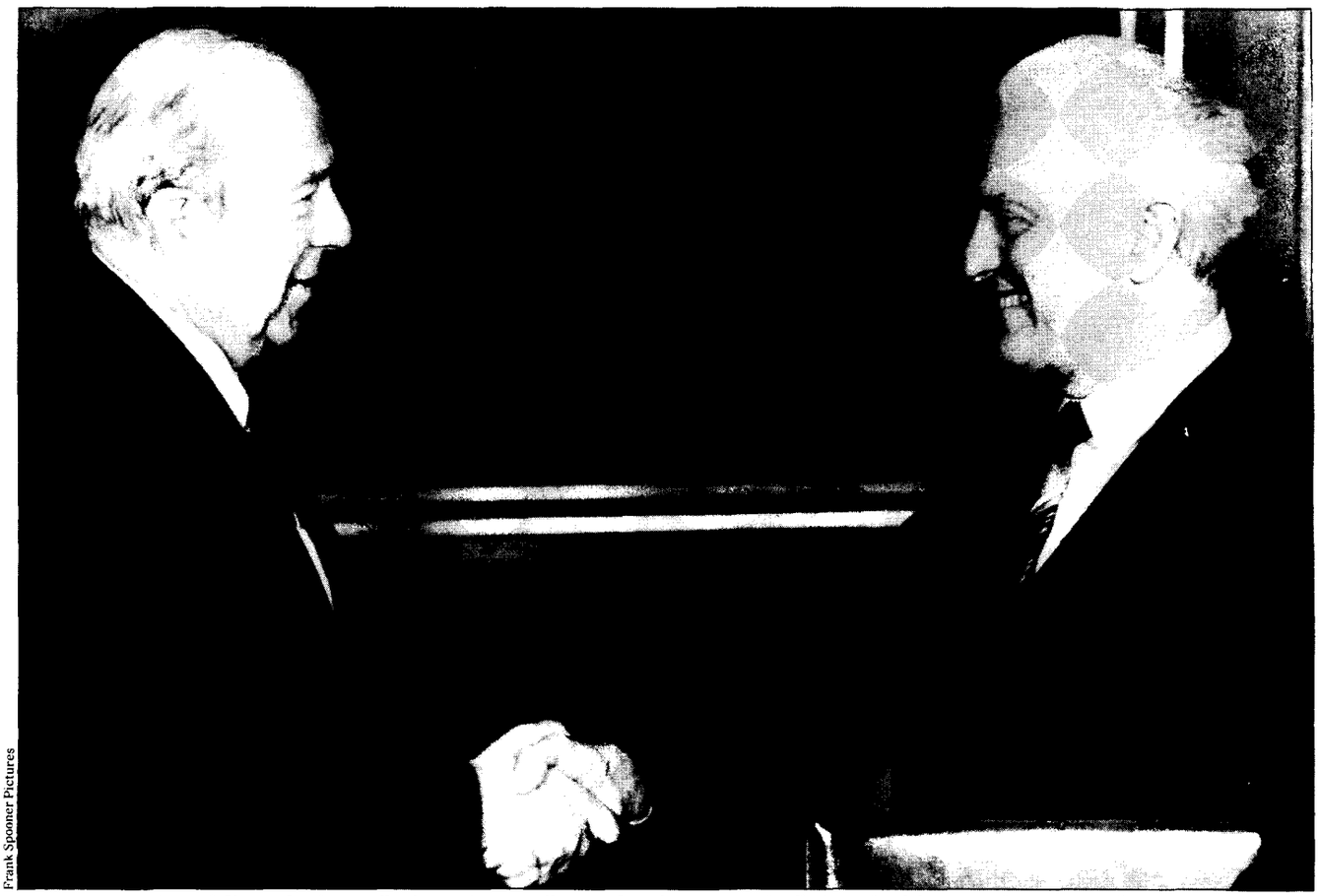

Frank Spooner Pictures

Shultz and Shevardnadze: will a future intermediate nuclear forces summit eliminate land-based nuclear weapons?

Two Paths To Summit

Although there is no sign that either side has modified any of its basic positions, hopes are high for an early Reagan-Gorbachev INF (Intermediate Nuclear Forces) summit that will eliminate land-based nuclear weapons.

The superpowers have quite different expectations. The US sees an INF deal as a way to remove a political problem and allow alternative weapons to be substituted. The USSR supports it as a disarmament measure. Negotiations now have come full circle from Reykjavik and still may prove fruitless.

For over two decades the US has resisted any curb on the modernisation of its own forces, while advocating reductions in ageing weapons which the USSR has in greater number. The US version of arms control usually allows for 'modernisation' to enable the arms race to continue unabated. This was their negotiation strategy at Reykjavik and has continued since.

At Reykjavik, a near-agreement to eliminate existing strategic and intermediate nuclear weapons foundered because the US insisted on the continued development of SDI (Star Wars).

For its part, the USSR wanted a complete halt to all new weapons development.

Whereas the US position cannot be reconciled with a desire to end the arms race, the Soviet position is more understandable. They see no point in eliminating old weapons merely to replace them with new ones. Their experience of earlier arms control treaties has made them suspicious of any partial agreement that, even indirectly, appears to sanction new weapons systems.

In terms of immediate results, the Reykjavik mini-summit was a failure. But it did change the climate of world opinion and has encouraged further negotiation. While many thought that Reykjavik would end meaningful arms negotiations, Soviet initiatives have maintained the momentum.

The Soviet approach arises from several factors: acceptance that there are currently more than enough weapons to deter aggression; fear that this relatively safe situation may not last if the arms race continues; disillusionment with previous arms control measures that merely redirected the arms race into new channels; and, above all, a new-found sensitivity to Western public opinion.

The initial US response to Reykjavik was to blame the failure on an unrealistic Soviet insistence on comprehensive disarmament and to suggest that a more modest and separate INF agreement was within grasp. Reagan wants an INF deal since land-based intermediate-range missiles are the only arena where the USSR outnumbers the West (to counter the overwhelming superiority of NATO warheads targeted at Europe). The US also has accepted that the political unpopularity of its land-based INF weapons in Europe far outweighs their military value.

This is why the Soviet Union still may decide to make a deal dependent on agreement on other disarmament measures. Apart from the imbalance inherent in the

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zero-zero option (essentially that the USSR and Eastern Europe are more at risk from sea and air based intercontinental and submarine launched missiles than they are from land-based INF missiles), it could be used to legitimise the remaining 95% of nuclear warheads currently stockpiled, and delay negotiations for their abolition.

Initially the Soviet Union did stand firm for the comprehensive Reykjavik near-agreement. But once the US administration was irrevocably committed, they then agreed to separate INF negotiations – to the obvious chagrin of the US and its NATO allies.

Since then the US has moved the goalposts at great speed, finding more and more objections to its own proposals. Significantly, these objections concede the Soviet case at Reykjavik for a global disarmament package. The arguments have come full circle.

The consequence of the post-Reykjavik negotiations, with the Soviet Union making new proposals each time the momentum appeared to be flagging or a beleaguered President Reagan needed a lifeline, is that the US has become more committed to an INF deal in the context of continued negotiations for more far-reaching disarmament; a major triumph for Soviet diplomacy.

The Soviet tactic has been to link the INF discussions with the agenda for further disarmament measures. Having now established the principles of an INF deal, they wish to ensure that there will be a worthwhile follow up before finalising the agreement.

If the Soviet Union agrees to an INF deal it will be because they believe it could be a step towards a nuclear-free world. If Reagan agrees it will be as a substitute for more far-reaching disarmament measures. The tricky bit is to persuade Reagan to abandon Cruise and Pershing weapons and at the same time to commit the US to further negotiations.●

John Cox

Parting In The Middle

If Mrs Thatcher had gone for an October election, Alliance leaders would have cancelled their holidays and spent the summer stoking up their attacks on the government.

She went for June – and those same leaders have spent most of the summer attacking each other.

With the onset of the conference season, the flow of blood from the SDP and Liberal camps – and the camps within the camps – is set to increase.

The SDP ballot satisfied no-one. David Owen lost, resigned and began planning to form his own party in his own image. But the vote in favour of a merger was not sufficiently large to give a clear negotiating mandate to its advocates.

As Dr Owen said himself, the SDP is, predictably, split down the middle and the likelihood of a third and fourth party fighting one another – as well as their Labour and Conservative opponents – at the next election seems high.

So where does the 'Alliance' go from here?

For the mergerites in the SDP, the answer is simple – but almost impossible to achieve. They must maximise their support within the party, while it still exists, to ensure they, first of all, get a two-thirds majority when the constitutional changes are put to a second ballot early next year and, equally importantly, carry the maximum number of Social Democrats with them into the new party.

The importance of the two-thirds majority is that, if they fail, they will be leaving the party rather than taking it with them.

They would be in the weakest possible position for policy negotiations with their new Liberal partners, while Dr Owen and his followers could keep the SDP name and claim to have inherited the mantle of social democracy.

And if too many are left in the Owen camp, his party would gain the credibility it needs to be a realistic fourth force, at least in terms of the damage it could do to the third in the polling stations.

The crucial difficulty for the mergerites in their negotiations with the Liberals this autumn will be that they must compromise to form a joint party but appear uncompromising in attracting into it those Social Democrats who voted against a merger.

Dr Owen and his followers fear the dilution of social democracy. They fear the abandonment of the 'social market' philosophy. They fear the adoption of non-nuclear defence and energy policy. Deep down, they do not really like the Liberals.

But Alec McGivan, who quit as SDP national organiser to help run the pro-merger campaign, says that these people make up only one-third of those who voted against a merger – about 10% of the SDP's 60,000 members.

The others, he says, voted

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against a merger because they felt things were moving too fast, because they wanted to signal their support for their leader, or because they were worried about safeguards.

Another six months, without David Owen as leader and with successful merger negotiations to persuade them, and most of this second group could be won over to the new Alliance. Then it would be all-out warfare in a bid to crush the Owenites.

This prospect, says McGivan, will strengthen the hand of the SDP in its negotiations with the Liberals. Their allies, too, will want to see the new party's strength maximised and would be open to persuasion on such issues as one-member-one-vote democracy, a representative policy-making conference, a national membership list and a common set of principles like those in the SDP constitution.

If those kinds of issues are sorted out, coherent policies supported by the mass of the new party will spring from them, he says. Certainly the new party will be on the centre-Left of British politics, while the Owenites could find themselves on the centre-Right, he argues.

These calculations however, tend to ignore both the strength of feeling of those opposing the merger and the contempt that exists, equally, among some Liberals for the SDP.

Each side accuses the other of having no philosophy. The Liberals say the SDP is too centralist – the Owenites say the Liberals are incoherent. The Liberals will not roll over and offer the SDP mergerites everything they want. And, even if they did, there would still be a fair number of Social Democrats who would have nothing to do with the new party.

They may only, as Alec McGivan believes, total 10,000. But they are enough to raise more serious questions about Centre-party politics than the sight of the two Davids at the last election ever did.●

Malcolm Boughen

Research For Sale

The government has announced that it will end the system of tenure (guaranteed employment) for university academic staff in the education bill being introduced this autumn. The practical reason may be to limit the cost of making academics redundant when departments are cut, but the effect may be more insidious.

The government has been cutting universities' grants and forcing them to seek an ever-increasing proportion of their income from research contracts and business.

The system of tenure has been a powerful counterbalance to the commercialisation of universities. It has guaranteed the entitlement of academics to state views and pursue research at variance with corporate or governmental interests. Its removal will further encourage vice-chancellors to operate their institutions as commercial ventures, touting for research contracts, and hiring and firing staff at will. It will bring to the academic labour market the 'flexibility' which right wingers hold to be so essential to the success of enterprise in the economy.

By withdrawing the state from the funding and protection of universities, the government is also removing what amounts to a hidden subsidy to critical ideas. Will universities still be free to research the harmful effects of food additives against the interests of the food industry, for example?

Paradoxically, the changes do tackle real problems. Universities have been painfully slow at recognising the world outside, and are criticised for preventing experimentation in schools by encouraging overly-academic A-level syllabuses. And tenure has shielded teaching staff from accountability over the quality and content of their lectures. Though the government's motives are suspect, their actions may receive quiet support.●

Jeremy Klein

Frank Spooner Pictures

Gulf minefield: US fleet deployed to protect Kuwaiti tankers

Strategy Against The Great Satan

The deaths of the Iranian pilgrims during their demonstration in Mecca and the intensification of Iran's war of words with what the Ayatollah Khomeini has described as the 'greater and lesser satans' (that is the United States and its local Arab allies) have led Western commentators to seek explanations of Iranian behaviour based on notions of Islamic fundamentalism or the religious rivalry between Sunni and Shii muslims.

However, a better starting place is the observation that the overthrow of the Shah, the mass mobilisation of the people and the attempt to create a new political and moral order in Iran have a number of the features which have characterised the major revolutions which have taken place in the world since 1789. These include, at home, the overthrow of a discredited ruling class, the release of the energy, imagination and ambition consequent on the political involvement of large sections of the urban lower classes, and the appearance of what Trotsky identified as the phenomenon of 'dual power' in which organisations like the revolutionary guards and the revolutionary courts coexist, uneasily, with the more formal structures of power represented by the army and the state's own legal system. They also include the sense of being encircled by enemies, involvement in wars with neighbouring states and the development of policies designed to spread the revolution on behalf of the 'hungry, bare-footed and oppressed' (Khomeini again).

All this is not to deny the central importance of the religious component in the Iranian revolution. But it does point to the fact that much of its strength comes from its leaders being able to express their faith in a modern idiom which relates directly to ideas of which only 20th century Iranians could possibly be aware. Here is no fundamentalist attempt to return, root and branch, to a simplified golden age. Rather it is a single-minded desire to use the modern weapons, the modern systems of communications and the modern institutions of government which they had seized from the Shah to protect themselves, and by extension all muslims, from the very modern perils which threatened to oppress them, above all the seeping moral corruption which they saw as the major instrument of Western domination of the Third World.

Seen in this context, the main stimulus to the recent rise in Iranian rhetorical violence has been the threat to

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The coffin of a martyr: demonstrations in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

the revolution implied by the appearance of American and other foreign warships in the Gulf. This is identified as dangerous in its own right; it also serves to strengthen the power of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf sheikdoms whose oil riches have done so much to keep Iraq's war effort going. One result has been an appeal for internal unity based on the theme of Iran as an embattled nation which sees itself as the victim of aggression inspired by hatred towards its own deeply held religious principles. Another has been the attempt to strike back at its enemies by obtaining general Islamic support for its opposition to United States' hegemony. It was this which led directly to the demonstration in Mecca.

But if these were the Iranian motives, what exactly have they achieved? As far as the Mecca incident itself is concerned, it may well prove to have been counter-productive. It was almost universally condemned by the heads of all the Islamic states and excited widespread condemnation among Sunnis, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the world muslim community. In addition, by virtually declaring war on the Saudi ruling family, the Iranians will have driven Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies even closer to the United States.

However, the effect inside Iran itself may well be much more positive. Vital Iranian interests are directly threatened by the US naval presence in the Gulf and the regime will need all the unity and popular support it can muster in this dangerous hour. It is also essential that its rival, and increasingly competitive leaders are able to work together under Khomeini, to devise a common strategy to meet the crisis and to prevent any of their more impetuous followers among the Revolutionary Guard from creating an incident, such as an attack on an American ship, which would leave them open to a damaging military reprisal. Put more briefly, heightened rhetoric has been used to serve the cause of local unity and restraint.

But what if this fails? Two scenarios out of the many which have been offered seem most worth exploring. The first is the renewal of Iraqi attacks on Iranian tankers or on Iranian oil terminals in the Gulf, something which the Americans have almost certainly vetoed up to now, but which might just seem worth the risk to the embattled President Saddam Hussein. Here the likely Iranian response has already been spelled out very clearly: not an attack on a US ship but on the oil export facilities of one of Iraq's Arab allies like Kuwait. The second, and infinitely more dangerous against scenario, is the deliberate or accidental Iranian attack on an American ship followed by a major American strike Iranian military bases. This would certainly provoke a second round of Iranian counter-measures, either in the Gulf itself or against American targets somewhere else in the world, raising the possibility of what would in effect be a limited war between the US and Iran. How far this would escalate is an open question; but it seems likely that it would involve the states on the Arab side of the Gulf and, if oil supplies are stopped, naval vessels from many of the world's major maritime nations. We remain clearly in the world of *realpolitik* rather than religion.●

Roger Owen

It's All In The Genes?

British scientists' recent discovery that many sufferers of colon cancer share the same unusual genetic make-up is the latest, and one of the most important, breakthroughs in the awesome science of the new genetics.

The finding – published in *Nature* on August 13 – raises immediate hopes of greatly improving diagnosis and treatments for this deadly condition. In addition, it aptly demonstrates the power of DNA genetic technology today – for increasingly biologists are finding genetic aspects to a vast range of diseases. The illnesses involved range from straightforward, but nevertheless fatal, ailments such as cystic fibrosis and thalassaemia, to more complex conditions like heart disease or mental illness in which several interacting genes seem to be involved.

These developments offer the imminent prospect of prenatal screening for many lethal conditions, and of understanding the exact role of genes in various illnesses – a move that could one day lead to the production of a host of new drugs and treatments.

However, there is a down side to this new 'wonder' medicine.

Writing in *New Scientist* recently, two scientists, David Cooper, of King's College Hospital, London, and Barefoot, of Edinburgh University expressed the problem in this way: 'In the short term, the introduction of genetic tests on a wide scale poses serious ethical problems, because we will be able only to diagnose, but not treat or prevent, the development of the disease. We need to appraise the probable social consequences of such developments before genetic testing is introduced. In the absence of preventative treatment, predisposed individuals might suffer discrimination in employment or

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health and life insurance'.

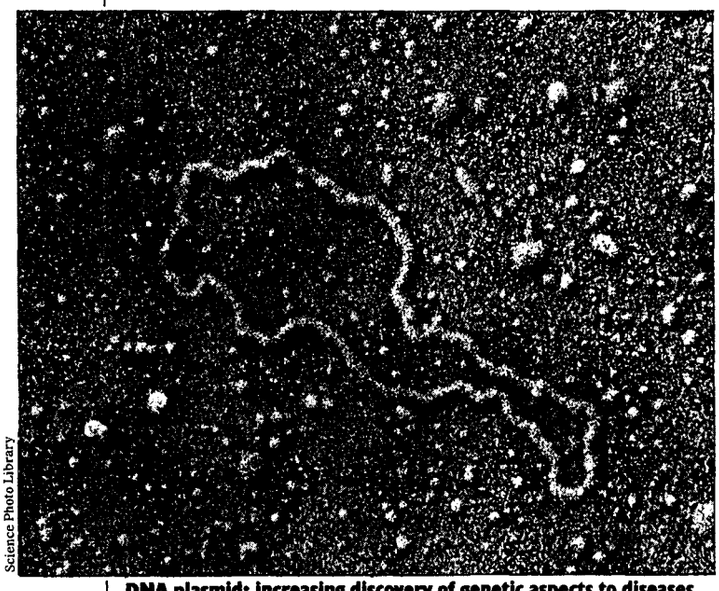
Such claims are not wilful exaggerations, for in some cases genetic screening services have already had unfortunate consequences. The story of sickle cell disease screening in America is a case in point. This crippling, sometimes fatal, inherited blood disease is only contracted by a child if both parents are carriers. However, being a carrier is itself a symptomless, harmless condition. But in the 1970s, when US health authorities set up a screening programme – to pinpoint carriers and warn them about the dangers of marrying other carriers and therefore producing affected children – the job was botched. Some states made screening mandatory for blacks only. (Sickle cell particularly affects people of African origin, while cystic fibrosis is the main inherited disease of white Caucasians). Other states, such as Massachusetts, actually declared – quite wrongly – that carriers had a disease in its own right. The overall result was widespread discrimination over jobs, marriage and health insurance.

The introduction of other, more recent, genetic screening tests have been much more successful, however. In north London, a programme for screening for the inherited blood disease, thalassaemia, has been set up for the local Cypriot community (people of Mediterranean and Asian backgrounds are particularly prone to this condition) and has received an enthusiastic response.

Such successes are encouraging. Nevertheless, the sheer scale of the revolution ahead threatens to be overwhelming. It was recently revealed that 18 leading US companies have already begun genetic screening of their employees, while a further 54 said they planned to do so in the near future. The aim is to detect if workers have special genetic susceptibilities to chemicals or other aspects of their working environments.

The journal *Chemical Week* justified such moves in this way: 'It makes no economic sense to spend millions to tighten up a process that is dangerous only for a tiny fraction of employees – if the susceptible individuals can be identified and isolated from it'. But other scientists see such screening in a far more alarming light. By selecting only those who are genetically fit for work, employers will have embarked down a very frightening road. As one union official put it: 'Never mind weeding out the susceptibles. Let's make sure the workplace is cleaned up first'.●

Robin McKie



Science Photo Library

DNA plasmid: increasing discovery of genetic aspects to diseases

Mosaics In The Spotlight

At the year's largest international gathering of the archaeological world, from September 5-12, over 150 mosaic specialists will meet in Bath to discuss the mosaics of the Roman Empire and the Byzantine and medieval periods. This event is the fifth colloquium of AIEMA (the International Association for the Study of Ancient Mosaics) and the first to be held in Britain since AIEMA was founded in Paris in 1963. Mosaic studies have become more intense and organised over the last decade, so much so that it is now planned to increase the frequency of colloquia.

Contrary to what one might expect, Britain has some outstanding examples of mosaics from the Roman period. The largest mosaic north of the Alps – nearly 50 ft square – is situated at Woodchester, and the 'Hinton St Mary' mosaic in the British Museum is thought to be the earliest such representation of Christ in the world.

However, of the 1,100 mosaics recorded since the 17th century, over 70% are now destroyed, 'lost' or otherwise inaccessible.

So the mosaics which can be seen in museums and *in situ* are just a small percentage of the mosaics created in Britain.

As to discovery and preservation, mosaics are vulnerable under inadequate legislation and funding in this country. If the site is not designated as protected then no-one need report a discovery. Even on protected sites, applications for excavation can be held up waiting for government consent – which is not automatic. The National Trust, itself reliant on public subscriptions and private gifts, will only take on new projects of this type if they have a guarantee of funding attached, to do the necessary work. In Sweden, by contrast, there are state obligations to do something with whatever antiquity or ancient site is found, and this becomes state property.

Among the topics at the Bath conference will be the recent discovery of a large roman settlement at Carranque, near Toledo, said to contain the finest mosaics in Spain. One of the British contributions is on 'Mosaics on the Market': a subject of topical concern following the recent Sotheby's sale of a 2′×1′6″ fragment from a Welsh church, for £250,000.

Romano-British Mosaics: an exhibition of paintings of Roman mosaics by David S Neal will be held at the Victoria Art Gallery in Bath from September 6 to October 3.●

Jane Critchley

Littlecote Park mosaic

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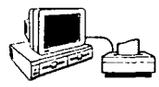

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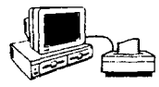

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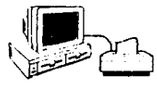

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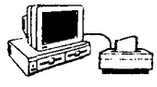

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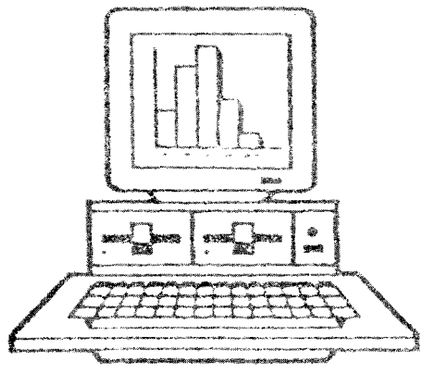

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Boy's Own Spies

Do you know what you think about the *Spycatcher* saga – and if you do, do you know what to do with those feelings?

I ask because there was something shocking about the Mori poll in the *Sunday Times* on August 2 about *Spycatcher*. When asked whether they thought Peter Wright's claim that members of the British secret service tried to undermine the Wilson government was true, 49% of respondents said they either didn't know or had no opinion. And while 56% thought the government was handling the *Spycatcher* case badly, 26% didn't know or had no opinion. When asked whether they opposed the government's attempts to prevent publication in Britain, 46% said they were opposed and 17% said they didn't know or had no opinion.

How come so many people don't know what to think? That *Spycatcher* has not yet become Britain's Spygate is not just a problem of information, it is a problem of politics. Clearly the government has been successful not only in harassing the publishers, but also in containing the crisis – it has been locked up in a litigious phoney war. The substance of *Spycatcher* – the spies within – has been subordinated to the more opaque issue of press freedom.

Spycatcher has stiffened the spine of the press, particularly the heavies, some of which have written poignant elegies on the state of British democracy.

But these opinion poll results reveal how constipated are the politics of civil liberty in Britain.

If people are confused or don't care, that in itself signifies a pessimism about both the *corruption* and the *invincibility* of the British establishment. It's a fatalism about the fragility of democracy.

Among women journalists on the Left, there has long been a critique of the Boys Own school of journalism which prizes the anonymous brown envelope containing confidential documents – high value, hard news. We have often felt demeaned by our 'soft news' imperative to uncover the mood of movements, to find what is hidden in the obvious, to reveal the secret life not of spies but of people with and without power. It's a bias towards explanation.

Perhaps this coincides with a tendency on the Left over the last two decades to reflect more critically upon the state of our own political art, to turn away from conspiracy theories and to explore the roots of the Right in popular consciousness.

The liberating aspect of this has been to include ourselves in the political process – as participants instead of victims – while the secrets and spies syndrome has often seemed to confirm our sense of exclusion.

Or, as a friend put it the other day, secrets and spies seem alienating 'because it is a game played out by the establishment, at a level at which people feel they can't intervene, a secret code between ex-Oxbridge toffs. I get irritated and bored by it, even though I know it's serious. It's a great spectacle but it is like you're peeping in on someone else's lifestyle.'

It isn't surprising that Labour's most confident crusaders on *Spycatcher* have been independent spirits, refugees from the ruling class, who probably went to school with the *dramatis personae*. We didn't go to the same schools as these men of the establishment. And not only us – their sisters didn't either. So it's a problem both of class *and* gender.

But the alienation and the fatalism are reinforced by the passivity of labourism: Labour seems panicked by spies, secrets and the secretive state, because, of course, as a party of government, it is also party to *its* secrets. It has also been its victim – and its problem seems to be that it doesn't know how to recover from either role.

The secret services saw Labour off in 1924 with the fraudulent Zinoviev letter, aided and abetted by the press. They secured the imprisonment of the Communist Party's leadership in 1925 and they've been bugging and bungling their way around radical politics ever since.

The possibility of popular vigilance has been cauterised by labourism. Labour has always been weak on civil liberties and today has seemed unable to activate any popular anger around *Spycatcher*. Part of its problem is its own relationship to the state, which was exposed by Tony Benn during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Another problem, when in government, has been its relationship to its own constituency, the people, and it must often have wondered who it could rely on when it became estranged from its own side. Had the secret services shown Harold Wilson their files on Communists during the seafarers' strike in 1966 when Wilson suggested that the strike was a Communist conspiracy?

Did the Labour Right share the secret services' definition of 'the enemy within' during the 1960s and 1970s, when MI5 apparently turned its mind increasingly to home-grown socialism? Labour has always been terrified of the slur of treason and during the cold war has been implicated in the twists of treachery as its wartime ally, the Soviet Union, was abandoned.

To this day, part of Labour's political angst is the legacy of its subordination of an independent foreign policy to the United States – in its schizoid foreign policy, 'defence' is still defined by the cold warriors and 'disarmament' is deployed against it by the far Right to denote appeasement, a key word transformed by the postwar realignment.

Why did Lord, formerly Sir, Jim Callaghan so reluctantly and so belatedly add his voice to the clamour for an inquiry into Peter Wright's allegations? What did he know? Did he, as Peter Jenkins wondered in The *Independent* a few months ago, doubt the wisdom 'of rattling around the skeletons in what could turn out to be a crowded cupboard?'

It was not the 'was Hollis a Soviet agent?' argument that prompted the government's ban, but the allegations about the CIA-inspired secret investigations into Wilson and the threat to destabilise the Labour government supported by 30 relatively senior MI5 men.

That is a breathtaking allegation, which Peter Hennessy in The *Independent* last April reckoned was 'prima facie evidence of coronary disease at the secret heart of British government'; evidence at which only 'a political society and a public life that has become so jaded as to be unshockable' could fail to be stirred.

Hennessy had urged that this become an election issue. It didn't. Not because people don't care about it, but because the Labour Party appears not to care enough about it to generate a movement which could express how people might care.

Even in the institutions of labourism, Spygate is a silence – it hasn't generated resolutions for this year's Labour Party conference, nor is it on the TUC's agenda. The silence stands in stark contrast to the Labour movement's agitation around GCHQ. But then trade union rights were at stake. Now it's our constitution that's at stake. But that just isn't part of the labour movement's conversation.

Being too respectable, the Left hasn't been pirating *Spycatcher* so that its own people can at least read it first hand. Being unused to taking initiative, it has not been importing books from the US.

All of us on the Left are paralysed by our own pessimism. If anyone has taken responsibility for Britain's Spygate, it is largely the liberal Right and centre Left. But if they educate, they don't agitate and organise – that's what we're supposed to do.●

Beatrix Campbell

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LETTERS

Moral Panic

I have no arguments with the article on child abuse (*MT*, August). But its references and language were part of the 70s, a place that *Marxism Today* seems stuck in when dealing with sexual politics. The reason is generational but it's also a conservatism that is failing us politically. The old identities of socialist or radical feminist and anti-sexist politics have been disrupted, the sexual political map is changing and I sense an uncertainty about the direction we should be moving in. *Marxism Today* needs to take up this challenge.

The Labour Party skirts around the moral and sexual panics of the last few years; AIDS, homosexuality and now child abuse have become major political issues which the Left is still ignoring. Consequently, we don't have a popular and radical language to talk about sex and the family on our terms. In Cleveland, the lack of a national radical voice is allowing papers like the *Daily Mail* to shift the debate away from the crisis of child abuse to its own 'scandal' of the welfare state.

Stuart Bell has played his part in this. He personifies the coming together of sexual politics and the Labour Right. In defending its patriarchal traditions it slips with ease into the politics of the moral Right.

What we are offering is a reduction of sexual politics to a list, categorising a variety of oppressions, divorcing itself from wider political analysis and considerations. It's like leftism, a person's category becomes the *raison d'être* of their political thinking. It complements the hard Left and trotskyist 'principled position' politics, relying on its own sense of righteousness rather than political analysis. It's symptomatic of how parts of the Left have appropriated other people's sexual politics, neither understanding them nor recognising their own implication in its critique. The attempts of municipal socialism to administrate a sexual politics into existence have revealed this lack of thinking as the subsequent backlash knocks everyone sideways and even undermines the efforts of the constituents the policies were supposed to help.

The lack of a civil rights politics in this country has meant that sexual political movements have been fragmented, engaging with the Left from a strong moral position but a weak organisational and political one. The result is a lot of rhetoric and a few ill thought out actions.

The language of individual rights and citizenship offers a framework for developing a politics around sexual identity, culture and power. It can affirm a plurality of sexual identities and also offer a voice to those issues and people excluded from the patriarchal collectivism of the Left. The strength of such a politics is that it takes issue with Thatcher's individualism and consumer-choice ethic by posing a more substantial and valid basis for citizenship; equality and democracy. ●

Jonathan Rutherford, London

Carelessness

Remembering that Andy Pollak regards the Provisionals as social democrats (*MT*, August) will always help me to live with his criticisms of my recent book *Broadening the Battlefield: H-Block and the Rise of Sinn Fein*.

The assertion that my Provisional sources are poor is hard to take seriously from someone who recently wrote a 456 page book about Ian Paisley without conducting a single attributable interview with either Paisley or anyone currently in his circle.

If he had done more than flick through it he would no longer be wondering why the IRA Army Council didn't order an end to the 1981 hunger strike in July. He would also have noticed that it contained attributable interviews with two surviving 1981 hunger strikers and a variety of people involved with them, including many Provisional sources. It also contains previously unpublished material taken from minutes of H-Block committees, the prison letters of Bobby Sands, (classified) minutes of the British Prisons Inter Services Intelligence Committee, and the IRA training manual.

Any reviewer is entitled to disagree with what I have written and to comment accordingly. However, dismissing my work without taking the trouble to seriously examine it or review its contents is a disservice to myself and to readers of *Marxism Today*. ●

Liam M Clarke, Co Antrim

Mainstream Marxism

Thank you for treating me, a non-marxist reader, as an intelligent individual.

Marxism ceased to be an option for me several years ago when the seller of a marxist newspaper discovered that I wasn't particularly interested in going to a lecture on Marx or in buying his publication. 'I suppose you're a fucking Tory, you'd better fuck off before I punch your fucking face in', is not, to my mind, the best way to promote marxism.

I was given a copy of *Marxism Today* and expected the usual simplistic hectoring. Instead I read an intelligent assessment of Sinn Fein and the IRA by Mary Holland, and an excellent piece on the City by Hamish McRae.

There was a lapse from fact into statement of opinion without supporting evidence in Mary Holland's assumption that the IRA gunmen attacking Loughgall would have surrendered with little violence, which I doubt, but this is not particularly important.

What is important is that *Marxism Today* is an intelligent and readable magazine. I don't agree with its political stance, but it argues a case as if I was an individual rather than merely one of the party faithful requiring a regular injection of rhetoric to keep up my spirits.

If only others who try to promote the marxist cause took the same lines, marxism would be a serious, mainstream, political force. ●

R D Couttie, Essex

MacBride Principles

Beatrix Campbell's conception of the nature of politics, the structure of the labour market and the role of the trade union movement in N Ireland (*MT*, July) is over simple.

She implies that the opposition of the trade union movement to Sinn Fein represents a collaboration with the strategies of the British government in Northern Ireland. Ms Campbell should be aware of the dangers of simply endorsing those forces which a government regards as the principal enemy.

The IRA's military campaign, fully endorsed by Sinn Fein, has degenerated into the sectarian killing of construction workers employed in the maintenance of police stations or the blowing up of 'economic targets' like Chinese restaurants. The politics of Sinn Fein have helped to legitimise the fundamentally anti-democratic transformation of Northern Irish society. The 'military campaign' does not significantly damage the British government. When stung, it is capable of overwhelming retaliation as was the case at Loughgall.

The trade union movement has opposed the MacBride Principles for three simple reasons: Firstly, they are sufficiently vague as to be interpreted in different, perhaps contradictory, ways. Gerry Adams has called for the introduction of the MacBride principles because legal obligations, backed up by the threat of sanctions, had to be imposed on all employers in both the public and private sectors. It has, however, been the British government, not the MacBride principles, which has called for 'legal obligations backed up by the threat of sanctions'.

Secondly, they are an attempt to externally impose a solution rather than allow one to develop within the politics of the trade union movement. At the Irish Congress of trade unions, the principles were rejected in favour of a greater strengthening of the Fair Employment Agency which, as Ms Campbell admits, 'is likely to go even further than the principles'.

Thirdly, their net effect would be to reduce the number of job opportunities rather than increase them. In such a situation, no matter what the ratio of labour turnover, redressing inequalities would be more, not less, difficult.

Ms Campbell's view that changing the religious composition of employment would be a simple process of substitution of workers from one community with those from another shows an astonishing ignorance of the relationship between the religious and industrial geographies of Northern Ireland.

In Belfast, unemployment is concentrated in the north and west of the city – the bulk of jobs are in the east. Protestants in west Belfast are more likely to experience labour market disadvantage than those who live in east Belfast. This difference is more significant than those between Protestants and Catholics in West Belfast. This denotes a situation of complexity, hardly amenable to the simplistic proposals endorsed by Ms Campbell. ●

John Freeman, Belfast

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LETTERS

Economic Debate

Is the prominence given to the views of Peter Hain and Robin Cook (*MT*, August) an indication that at last we can expect a real debate within its pages on a left-wing economic strategy? Having analysed with great success the nature of Thatcherite privatisation, which is both an economic strategy and an ideology, *Marxism Today* has a major responsibility to generate discussion to achieve a convincing alternative perspective.

Unless there is some fresh and fundamental thinking by the marxist Left over economic matters, there is an ever-present risk that the electoral opportunism so prevalent in sections of the Labour Party will use the widely shared perception of the need to appeal to the better off as a reason for avoiding, rather than developing, new ideas.

Is it possible simply to re-establish the welfare state as it was, within the framework of a laissez-faire economy? Will the diversion of funds from military purposes suffice to restore the basis of a caring society or will this require in addition a high degree of social control of the economy?

If so, what form will this take? Which parts of our economy are best suited to conventional types of nationalisation and which might be organised otherwise? What relationship do we envisage between central planning and decentralised initiative? What sort of regional economic policies do we envisage?

How do we imagine that nationalised industries might be made accountable to their workers? How do we handle new technology, and the consequent problems relating to working hours, overtime, leisure and education that arise from its application? What will we do about the City and its capacity to wreck a progressive government within weeks if not days?

Failure to generate a genuine debate around such matters could cost the Left (and *Marxism Today*) dearly. ●

David Parker, Leeds

Human Rights

We were surprised, to put it mildly, to see your magazine carry an advert for the International Society for Human Rights, whose extreme right-wing affiliations and support for the racist regime in South Africa and Namibia are well known.

The ISHR has been particularly active in recent years on the issue of Namibia, working with South African propaganda agencies such as Strategy Network International in London, in a vicious campaign to undermine and discredit SWAPO and to promote the South African puppet government in Namibia. Its close allies in Britain include the Federation of Conservative Students and the actively pro-apartheid group of MPs in the House of Commons.

At a time when the people of Namibia and South Africa are intensifying their struggle to liberate themselves from imperialist and racist oppression, it is vital that we in Britain fight against the disinformation campaign waged by the ISHR and others who aim to change the terms of the debate on southern Africa – thus enabling Thatcher's government to give still more overt support to Botha's regime.

We feel sure that *Marxism Today* had no intention of being seen to support and promote South Africa's propaganda war, and are confident that the publication of this advertisement was a mistake which you will wish to remedy as soon as possible. ●

Sian Moore, Julia Hoyte, Namibia Support Committee

Bride Sales

The increasing demand by mainly rich Americans for Third World child brides, solicited mostly from Thailand and the Philippines, is a shameful practice. Earlier this year *Panorama* exposed the scandalous trade in girls as young as 13 and 14, who, with phony birth certificates and passports were being flown to America to marry rich middle-aged business men. The only alternative for these girls is a life of grinding poverty and prostitution in their own country.

This is the tragic reality behind the advert (*MT*, August) offering 'Beautiful Filipino ladies, 16-30 . . . contact Eastern Promise'. The tv programme gave the impression that this shameful trade had been outlawed here. I was saddened to see that *MT* appears to be assisting its revival. It is ironic that this was carried in an issue on the theme of child abuse. ●

Paul Watts, Merseyside

Labour Management

Robin Cook's analysis of the 'Hole in Labour's Heart' (*MT*, August) is sound as far as it goes. But it has one fatal flaw: the assumption that the Left's energy and creativity has been misdirected into identifying and responding to the needs of discriminated minorities.

While it is true that the Labour Party is uninterested in economic policy, Robin does not acknowledge these new ideas from the work of the GLC and other local authorities.

A key theme is that good management is good business, which in turn is about the recognition of trade unions, health and safety, equal opportunities (as well as being socially useful products). There are many successful firms both at home and abroad, (Lucas, Volvo, et al) which have done very well by acknowledging good management practices.

How can Robin Cook deny that to combat racism and reduce crime, unemployment has to be confronted head on and with equal conviction?

Too many have not appreciated that vital connection, or learnt the lessons of fascism and acknowledged that it may be with us again in a more complex and pernicious form. To consciously reduce the profile of, for example, racism, is to connive with this development, and to misunderstand what is happening.

We must be bold and convincing in promoting economic development. But combating racism must be part of the equation and be seen to be good business. ●

Michael Freudenberg, Manchester

Electoral Pact

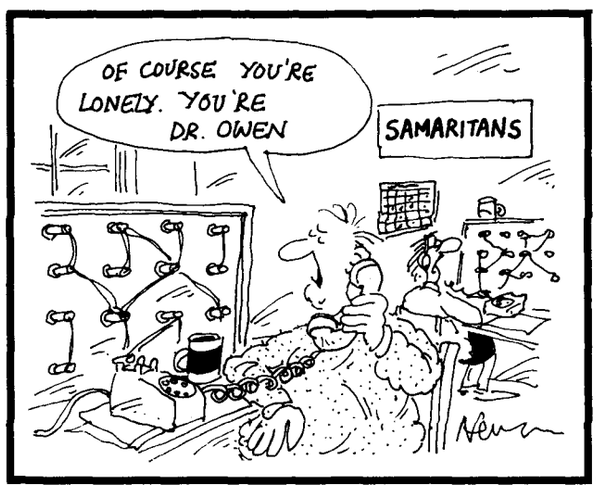
R G Sargent's warning (*MT*, August) that Thatcher is likely to be able to rule for the foreseeable future, in spite of being supported by only a minority of the popular vote, is absolutely correct.

Sargent suggests a firm Lib-Lab pact with electoral reform as an element. This will be very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve as the majority of the Labour Party will just not agree to sacrifice their party's independent campaigning role. But what could be achievable would be a concord having electoral reform as its sole objective and leading to a short parliament which would carry this through and which would then dissolve itself.

Such an electoral concord could embrace all parties in favour of electoral reform which could include the Labour Party, the Alliance, the Communist Party, the Green Party and the Nationalists. The concord would comprise an electoral agreement in which the incumbent party would not be opposed by any of the others and in Tory held seats the party which came second at the previous election would provide the candidate of the concord.

At succeeding elections, as at present, the parties would campaign independently for their own programmes but under the new electoral system. The policies of any new government would arise from the pattern of the voting which would far better reflect the views of the electorate than the present 'first past the post' system. ●

Vic Marshall, Yorkshire



Cartoon: Nick Newman

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Lessons In Elitism

Kenneth Baker's proposals would mean the establishment of a new system of quasi-independent schools for the wealthy and would threaten the viability of the existing education system. But, argues **Brian Simon**, the potential for a broadly-based campaign of resistance exists

Having brought almost the entire educational system to its knees, through the adoption of strict monetarist policies under the reign of Sir Keith Joseph, the Tory Party is now set on gaining electoral advantage through a basic restructuring and 'reform' of the whole system. Such, at least, seems the main motivation for a measure that is to take a large chunk of parliamentary time from the start of the October session through to the summer. We are in for a period of sharply-fought educational politics.

'We are going much further with education than we ever thought of doing before,' Margaret Thatcher told her favourite journalist, Sir David English, in an extended interview early in May. 'You mean there's going to be a revolution in the running of schools if you're re-elected?' asked her interviewer. 'That's right,' she answered. 'Money would flow to good schools and good headmasters (sic)' (*Daily Mail*, May 1, 1987). 'Tories: We'll End Schools Tyranny', headlined the *Mail* in huge black letters. 'The return of a Conservative government today will mean the break-up of the state education system which has existed since 1944,' wrote Peter Wilby, education correspondent of the *Independent*, on election day. He advised his readers not to vote Tory if they wished to save the system from destruction.

Thatcher confirmed, after the election, that the proposed education reform had a directly political purpose. 'Just as we gained political support in the last election from people who had acquired their own homes and shares,' she claimed, 'so we shall secure still further our political base in 1991-92 – by giving people a real say in education and housing.' The proposed bill is 'the key to the future: the biggest and most important legislation of the forthcoming parliamentary session' (*Independent*, July 17, 1987).

The pressure is on to push the bill through at maximum speed. Protests – by Jack Straw, the new shadow education spokesman, Sheffield city's education committee, and many others – that the time allowed for consultation was ludicrously short, and badly timed, have been met by education secretary Kenneth Baker's appeal to the exigencies of the parliamentary timetable (determined, of course, by the government). During July, several 'consultation' papers were issued, the most important dealing with financial delegation, open enrolment, 'opting out' and, above all, with the proposed national curriculum. Officials at the Department of Education and Science have clearly been working under pressure – even if the outlines of the bill were evidently drawn up before the election. On July 3, the DES announced that consultation papers 'can be expected in days rather than weeks . . . to allow a consultation period of at least three months' (*Times Education Supplement*, July 3, 1987). In fact, the most recent of these, on the curriculum – 40 pages of closely spaced type on A4 paper – was only published on July 24, allowing a consultation period on this most controversial of issues of only just over 2 months, till the end of September. The Education Act of 1944, with which the 'Baker bill' is being compared, was preceded by at least two years of consultation, and this during a war. Associations of all kinds, groups and individuals prepared their submissions and, in many cases, published them for open discussion well before the bill was finally drawn up. The same is true of the 1918 Fisher Act. The procedures used in the present case make it abundantly clear that there is no intention whatever to engage in serious consultation. The government knows what it wants, and is going to impose it by *force majeure* relying on its 100-plus majority in the Commons.[1]

What is the overall Tory strategy? Its main thrust is clear enough, and indeed has been overtly stated by Baker. Fundamentally, the objective is, through downgrading and by-passing local authorities, to establish a whole mini-'system' of quasi-independent schools between the prestigious 'public' schools on the one hand, and local systems of primary and secondary schools on the other. These would serve the 'yuppie' (and other) strata between the working class and the really wealthy. 'I want a much greater degree of variety and independence in the running of schools,' Baker told Stuart Maclure (editor, *TES*, March 3, 1987). 'I want to see a greater amount of variety and choice'.[2]

By appealing to 'variety' and 'choice', Baker is utilising an old-established Tory ploy. In the past, this argument was used to legitimise the tripartite system, as well as to give support for voluntary (church) schools when these were under attack. Today it is used to legitimise a variety of types or levels of schools, subsidised from public funds in various, often hidden, ways (eg, through the assisted places scheme), sometimes charging fees, and designed for intermediate social strata – professional, business and technocratic. While the Tories want a *variety* of schools, however, they are also arguing for *uniformity* in the curriculum where, they now claim, there is too much 'variety'.

Not everyone, even on the Tory side, agrees with this 'historic reform' as Baker describes it. To compare the proposed bill with what Rab Butler did, said Edward Heath in the debate on the Queen's Speech, 'would make the great man turn in his grave'. The various propositions being discussed (opting out, charging fees, etc) was 'part of the supermarket mentality in many right-wing quarters which believed education could be packaged like food. I warn the chancellor and the secretary of

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Laurie Sparham/Network

Private education: the Tories want a variety of schools but uniformity in the curriculum

state many of us feel passionately about these matters,' continued Heath, 'and we will not stand idly by and let them happen' (*TES*, July 10, 1987). (Heath, it is worth remembering, agreed in 1968-69 on the need to abolish the 11-plus and extend comprehensive schooling).

In March, a group of 'moderate' Tories formed the Conservative Education Association to support the state sector and counter the hard Right within the party, while, as we shall see, Tory-controlled local authorities are also on the move. All may not be plain sailing after all.

As for the bill itself, it is evident that both strategy and tactics have been carefully worked out, largely by various right-wing groups and 'think-tanks' which have been very active in the last few years.[3] Vouchers are not, apparently, to be brought in, in spite of much pressure. Instead, a more subtle set of linked measures are to be relied on to have the desired effect – that is, to push the whole system towards a degree, at least, of privatisation, establishing a base which could be further exploited later. Considered separately, there may be something to be said for some of these measures (for instance, financial delegation to heads and governors); but considered as a set of interrelated measures, as they must be, each can be seen to provide its specific thrust towards the desired objectives.

There is, first, the proposal to devolve financial responsibility for running schools more or less completely to the heads and governors. Some experience, though limited in scope, has already been gained in Cambridgeshire and elsewhere. There are a large number of problems here, such as over-burdening untrained heads with financial management (was it proposed, asked Heath, to recruit 31,500 bursars?), but of course the main objective is to loosen the schools from the hands of the local authorities, and encourage them to take the first step towards more advanced forms of independence.

Second, there is the proposal to allow 'open enrolment' (within a very broad limit) to all schools. Local authorities, in order to plan the contraction of their systems (due to falling rolls) rationally, with the aim of maximising the educational effectiveness of the system as a whole, have had powers till now to fix a limit to each school's intake. It is this which is to go. Schools, it is argued, must have the right to admit as many pupils as parents wish to send them, and so be permitted to expand considerably (and suddenly). Unpopular schools, conversely, must go to the wall – and be closed as a result of the operation of this form of market forces. The full implications of this proposal will be discussed shortly. In terms of overall strategy, however, the meaning of this step is clear. Popular schools, now with more or less full financial

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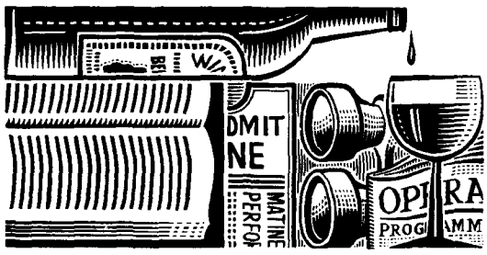

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responsibility, will soon begin to differentiate themselves from the others. This provides the springboard for the next step – opting out – also to be provided for in the bill.

Third, it seems likely that the bill will include clauses legitimising the charging of fees by schools for certain activities.[4] This was, of course, the issue where Thatcher put her foot in it during the election campaign, when she said that the objective was to charge fees in publicly maintained schools, only to be corrected by Baker. But fees for 'extras' seems a different thing – if, in fact, it is basically similar. The 1944 Act says that 'no fees shall be charged in respect of the education provision in any maintained school'. The intention appears to be to reverse this clause, and to permit such fees for 'extras' (which of course today include essential equipment and materials) to be charged. In some local authority areas this is already permitted, but to legalise the process through a new statute is a different matter. Clearly this fits in to the general strategy very precisely. Popular schools in affluent areas will be permitted to charge such fees, as will others of course; but this will provide such schools with the opportunity further to differentiate themselves from the ordinary run of schools, and to some extent to narrow their clientele to the more affluent section of the local population. So now the school is poised for break-out.

This takes us directly to the most important of the probable new clauses – that concerned with 'opting out', on which a 'consultation' paper has been issued. The proposal is that schools that wish to (as indicated by a simple majority vote of parents) may apply to 'opt out' from the local system of which they are a part, and become 'grant maintained' schools, receiving a grant directly from the DES instead of the local authority. All formal relations with the local authority would by this means be broken. The school would become 'semi-independent', receiving the bulk of its finance directly from the state. A further direct effect would be that the local system, as a 'system', would also be broken. Once again the full implications of this will be discussed below. Here the main emphasis is on the thrust of policy – and on the interrelations between the various measures being proposed.

The final step in this carefully designed progression – though I should make it clear that this goes beyond anything proposed in the bill, is denied by those behind this measure – would be a bid for 'independence' by successful opted-out ('grant-maintained') schools; that is, their recruitment to the independent sector. This could be achieved through a combination of fee-paying by parents (who will anyway be increasingly paying for 'extras'), and support from the exchequer through a large extension of the assisted places scheme, by which fees of individual pupils are paid directly by the DES. Many independent schools already rely on this source of funds for their very existence – it seems probable that several were saved from bankruptcy when the measure was introduced in the early 80s. There has already been talk of just such an extension of the assisted places scheme. By this means, the objective of increasing the provision of purely 'independent' schools for sections of the middle strata becomes a practical possibility.

Nothing has been said about the 20-plus city technology colleges which the government now proposes to establish, relying partially on funds extracted (reluctantly) from industry. These do not feature in the proposed bill. But it should be remembered that, through this means also, the 'variety' of semi-independent schools Baker favours will be enhanced over the next few years (again at the expense of disrupting local systems).[5]

There is space here only very briefly to report the reactions of responsible educationalists to some of these proposals. The open enrolment and opting out clauses are clearly identified by all as comprising the central thrust of this section of the bill. They will have the combined and clearly desired effect of acting both as stages for the enhancement of the semi-independent sector, and of depressing and downgrading the mass of ordinary schools for ordinary people's children, which will remain – at the bottom of the pile – under local authority control. They will also make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for local authorities to plan tertiary (16 to 19) reorganisation, or any other restructuring of their systems, necessitated as a result of falling rolls or other demographic changes. And so they will add to the general loss of morale and downgrading of the mass of schools for working people.

All this has been very clearly seen by those most intimate with local administration. The whole scheme has been condemned by Sir Roy Harding, general secretary of the Society of Education Officers (and a distinguished ex-chief education officer himself). In an article entitled 'Careering off down the wrong road', Harding strongly condemned the proposals, which he describes as a U-turn 'from the encouragement of good planning to its negation'; if these measures are implemented, he argued, standards in the schools would be bound to fall 'and it is likely there will be a fall for most children'. The effect of a school opting out from the local system will be to disrupt it. Such proposals, Harding suggested, must be amended by another U-turn; the government must 'show renewed concern for improved standards by introducing legislation which allows LEAs to plan school and staff provision so that all pupils can have a broad, balanced, relevant and appropriately differentiated curriculum' (*TES*, July 3, 1987). This is a reference to exhortations in the government's white paper of 1985, *Better Schools*.

'Increasing the provision of purely "independent" schools for sections of the middle strata becomes a practical possibility'

Another to point out the implications of opting out is Tessa Blackstone, ex-professor of educational administration, formerly deputy education officer at the Inner London Education Authority and now master of Birkbeck College, London University. 'Children's futures,' she concluded, 'are now threatened by a scheme casually destructive of the best in the maintained system, dangerously divisive, and administratively unworkable' (*Guardian*, June 9, 1987). Even the *Times Education Supplement* is contemptuous (*TES*, July 17, 1987). The proposal as it stands 'is going to raise costs and lower efficiency'. Open enrolment itself means 'the negation of planning'. If market forces are to prevail, 'planning will, in future, be retrospective; a matter of picking up the bits and presiding over the bankruptcies after the consumers have made their educational purchases'. It is extremely doubtful, if these measures are implemented, whether 'it makes any sense . . . to talk about a "system" at the local level'. A 'blight' will be put 'on all plans for restructuring, closures and mergers'.[6]

It must surely be clear that professional opinion is totally opposed both to the open enrolment proposal and that concerning opting out. It is on these grounds that many argue that the government's so-called 'Great Education Reform Bill' in practice means the actual break-up of the state education system as we have known it. In the circumstances, these measures are beginning to appear totally irresponsible, as also do (if to a lesser degree) the government's proposed clauses concerning the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) – perhaps the largest and most experienced education authority in the world. Here, the government is pursuing what the *Times Higher Education Supplement* describes as a 'sordid vendetta'. Baker is determined to break up the ILEA 'against all sense and against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the parents'. So here 'anything goes' (*THES*, July 31, 1987). The proposal is that local boroughs may have the right again to 'opt out' from the ILEA and go it alone. Wandsworth, Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, all well-heeled Tory authorities, are planning to do just that; but in this case, developments are likely to prove politically embarrassing to the government. A full analysis of the implications of these proposals concludes that 'one sure factor is that it will cost the government a lot of money to break up the ILEA', and that the measures proposed will turn schools into 'a major focus of political activity' (Julia Hagedorn, *TES*, July 10, 1987).

So much for what might be called the

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structural aspects of the 'revolution' promised by Thatcher. But there is another aspect to this bill. As mentioned earlier, while the Tories feel there has been too little variety among types of school, they also feel there has been too much in what is taught in them. A centrally imposed clampdown is now to take place. From now on all English and Welsh children must learn the same things, as more or less precisely defined within a 'national curriculum'. Furthermore, all children must be subjected to a series of precisely defined tests – to provide 'bench-marks', as Baker puts it – at the age of seven, 11, 14 and 16 (through the new exam: the seven graded certificates of general education, the GCSE). All this is to be statutorily determined through legislation. The wheel has come full circle.

Baker is on firmer ground, in terms of the time allowed for 'consultation', when he argues that there has been much discussion of the curriculum; what he does not mention, however, is that much of it has been severely critical of the increasingly energetic and ruthless thrust towards central control in this area, from both local authorities and teachers. A Mori poll showed recently that 65% of teachers believe that the secretary of state has sought too much power in running schools (*TES*, June 12, 1987). It is, however, fair to say that there probably is a broad consensus that a common core of subjects (or activities) is desirable – even a common curriculum. Those pioneering the move to comprehensive education back in the 50s and early 60s (including this author) certainly believed that here was an opportunity to offer *all* pupils access to knowledge, science and culture, and that to differentiate the curriculum for different groups of children was both arbitrary and divisive.

But those so arguing, then and now, hold that, if generally accepted 'guidelines covering the curriculum are to be offered, these must be determined as a result of full and democratic discussion by all those involved, particularly the teachers. And that there needs to be some forum established for discussion of such matters where plans and proposals can be evolved. The idea that a precisely defined curriculum, covering the ages five to 16, should be defined largely by civil servants at the DES (who are not educationalists, and have not themselves had any experience of actually teaching children), is and always has been entirely unacceptable. The result is likely to be a massive alienation of the teaching force of the country who, if this proposal is actually implemented, will find themselves increasingly de-skilled and further downgraded – as the correspondence columns of the national newspapers are already showing.

The curriculum consultation paper, for which a mere two months at the height of the summer is allowed for response, is a typical product of a remote, managerially-inclined bureaucracy. It is based on the concept that the curriculum is something to be 'delivered' to the child – as if it were a package of fish and chips – and that the extent to which he or she absorbs it can be precisely measured at specific ages by a series of tests. Education is about the development of human abilities and skills, as well as the 'absorption' of knowledge. But this is entirely left out of the account. That said, the actual content of the package is unimaginatively academic. The curriculum is defined in terms of subjects, as it originally was (when the state last intervened here) back in 1904. This 'state curriculum', it is proposed, is to take up between 80% and 90% of the pupil's time, leaving only some 15% for any kind of option or special interest. All, it seems, are to do the same curriculum, in whatever type of school – except that the government's own specially cherished new schools (the city technology colleges) are to be exempt, as are (unsurprisingly) the 'independent' schools. This is a curriculum for the masses. Its purpose is control.

Although a bow is made in the direction of teacher initiative, if this curriculum is imposed, the scope for imaginative teaching, for instance for the integration of subjects in line with the development of modern knowledge, for independent initiative by individual schools, groups of schools, or local systems, will be tightly constricted. Sheffield, for instance, is now involved in a highly imaginative and successful curriculum reform project covering all their schools, both primary and secondary, with the aim of developing new curricula and procedures in line with modern developments in knowledge and in pedagogy (educational practice). Unless a special dispensation is to be granted, all such creative work and thinking will go for nothing. The whole teacher-based curriculum reform movement, which is widespread and extremely positive, is at risk. No wonder Harry Rée, a distinguished ex-head and professor, has protested. At a stroke, he wrote to the *Independent*, all we have been working for all our lives is being wiped out.[7]

The curriculum paper lays down generally how much time should be spent on each subject at each stage, though focusing especially on the last two years (14 to 16). It also lays down when the 'bench-mark' testing is to take place, and how these test results are to be communicated to parliament, the public generally, employers, the local community, parents, teachers and even the children. The focus on the value and accuracy of such tests as are available (or will be developed) is naive, to say the least (here the bureaucratic character of the paper stands out most vividly). This is an exceptionally diffi-

'Downgrading the mass of ordinary schools for ordinary people's children'

Maggie Murray/Format

Comprehensive education: unpopular schools will be closed as a result of market forces

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cult area, as all educationalists know very well, but the DES officials responsible for the paper simply sweep such problems aside. Tests of this kind, writes Roger Murphy, head of the examinations and assessment unit at Southampton University, will almost certainly become 'crude remote measures of a very limited part of the achievement of primary pupils'. Instead, he argues, teachers should be given the training and resources needed 'to develop their own role in assessment of all children throughout the primary years' and not only at seven and 11 (*Forum*, Autumn, 1987). The bench-mark proposals are probably the worst aspect of a policy which, overall, is likely to severely damage the schools and their pupils.

As for the national curriculum, Denis Lawton, a curriculum expert and director of London University's Institute of Education, and Clyde Chitty, write that 'a national standardisation curriculum and external tests to assess achievement may well recreate the situation in late Victorian England when the vast majority of children were educated only to pass exams' (a reference to the 'payment by results' system). The proposal 'confuses education with training', the former being far more complex and difficult to evaluate. 'Education is about enriching a student's view of the world: not training him or her to give trite answers to complex questions'. We need, Lawton and Chitty write, 'to free the proposal for a national curriculum from the accompanying notion of age-related bench-mark testing which will simply act as a straitjacket on the entire system'. Above all, they conclude, 'we need to convince the government that their plans will acquire no credibility with educationalists and teachers while a national curriculum continues to be viewed by politicians and civil servants as a convenient bureaucratic device for exercising control over what goes on in schools' (*Forum*, Autumn, 1987). This they see as the main objective of the whole exercise. There are many who will agree with them.

The 'Great Education Reform Bill', it seems, comprises a very real threat of the viability of the country's education system as a whole, and also to the system of local government in which it has traditionally found its base. Whether it involves the actual break-up of the system as we have known it, as Peter Wilby has suggested, remains to be seen. This must partly depend on how effective a resistance to government plans can be mounted during the coming months. There is certainly scope and backing for such a resistance – to a scheme, or set of schemes, which can appear almost adventurous, but whose outcome, even if fully implemented in their pure form, must be highly problematic.

Where are the forces that could mount such an effective resistance? Those most directly concerned are the local authorities, whose systems are threatened; teachers, whose autonomy and procedures in their profession are at risk; and parents, whose children attending normal local authority schools would certainly suffer – that is, the great bulk of parents. These forces, clearly *potentially* powerful if they can work together, form the centres from which resistance can be mounted. Since the bill is to be introduced in parliament in October or November, and is to go through the normal parliamentary processes of debate and discussion (probably shortened by much use of the guillotine) in the winter, spring and perhaps early summer of next year, opposition, to be effective, must partly take the form of amendments either nullifying the proposed clauses, or radically modifying them in the direction of more democratic (and sensible) alternatives. Opposition, therefore, must be focused on parliament (both Houses, since it is expected that the House of Lords may have a large part to play due to pressure of parliamentary business), where it will be led by Labour's new shadow spokesman on education, Jack Straw (likely to be capable of a far more effective opposition than his predecessor). But resistance to the government's intentions cannot, of course, be left to parliament alone. A broad movement needs to be developed outside as the main means of ensuring that the real significance of these proposals are widely grasped among the population as a whole – in face of what is likely to be a continuing barrage of Tory propaganda in favour of the proposals, seen as central to building new bases of electoral support for 1991-92.

'The open enrolment and opting out clauses are...the central thrust of this section of the bill'

Already the constituent members of these oppositional groupings have begun to make their positions clear. In July, the Council of Local Education Authorities (CLEA), which includes Conservative authorities as well as Labour, Alliance and 'hung' councils, decided to establish a standing conference on education to argue its case favouring local control, and presumably to conduct a fight for it. The fact that Tory councils supported this initiative reflects again divisions within the Tory Party on this whole issue.

As far as the teachers are concerned, almost unanimous opposition to Baker's proposals can be expected; but how effective can this be made? Quick off the mark has been the National Union of Teachers, which has a strong resolution on a number of issues (condemning the national curriculum and testing) for the TUC this month. The NUT has already officially protested about the opting out proposals ('we believe grant-maintained schools will be elitist in character and divisive in their effect'), and about the bench-mark testing proposals ('it is an educational nonsense to force children through rigid tests so early and so often'). Of course, the teachers have other battles with the government under way, particularly those relating to the loss of negotiating rights, and these will also be strongly pressed. But it is to be hoped that the unions generally will get their act together in opposing, or proposing positive alternatives, to the main clauses of the bill which threaten the maintained system as a whole. United actions will be the more effective the earlier they get off the ground.

Finally, the main parents' association, the Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations, to take one example, is in no sense the government's poodle. Uniting 6,400 parent-teacher associations across the country, with 40 local executive committees, it can claim the leading role among such organisations (there are others; for instance, the Confederation for the Advancement of State Education). Indignant at the time allowed for 'consultation' (and its timing), the CPA has officially protested to Baker personally that the 'consultation' period should have been timed to coincide with the summer holidays when children are at home. Having taken a highly progressive line on a number of educational issues recently, there is little doubt that the confederation, and other organisations, will express clear and positive views in defence of the public system of education.

Government ministers are said (by an experienced observer) to have been 'startled by the passionate support for the state education and health services' voiced during the election; if the united voices of 'parents, churches, teachers and the local authorities can be mobilised in opposition to the Education bill', writes Maureen O'Connor, positive results may be achieved (*Guardian, June 23, 1987*). *I believe this to be a* correct assessment. The next few months will provide the test. ●

1 As I write, Sheffield's education committee has announced its decision to seek legal opinion in the hope of forcing the government to extend its deadline for consultation (*Guardian*, August 5, 1987).

2 Baker explained that about 7% or so go to independent schools, 93% to the state maintained sector. 'I'm responsible for that. What I think is striking in the British education system is that there is nothing in between. Now the city technology colleges are a half-way house. I would like to see many more half-way houses, a greater choice, a greater variety. I think many parents would as well' (*TES*, April 3, 1987).

3 For a useful assessment of these, Peter Wilby and Simon Midgley, the *Independent*, July 23, 1987.

4 A consultative document is expected on this, but has not been issued as this article goes to press; its formulation is probably causing some difficulty.

5 For a useful (critical) evaluation of this initiative, see Clyde Chitty, 'The Commodification of Education' (*Forum*, Summer 1987).

6 It seems that Baker has already imposed his own 'blight' on local authority reorganisation plans. It was reported early in August that *96* such plans are awaiting approval by the secretary of state, 'some have been before Mr Baker for as long as 18 months' (*Guardian*, August 3, 1987).

7 Harry Judge, ex-comprehensive head and now director of the Department of Educational Studies at Oxford University, has also protested. Teachers in future would be 'shackled to a national curriculum in the worst traditions of centralised countries', he told the CLEA conference. Baker's legislation would turn teachers into 'an oppressed bureaucracy' (*TES*, July 17, 1987).

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The Maya Character

Born in St Louis, Missouri, in 1928, **Maya Angelou** began her literary career as a poet, but is best known for her highly acclaimed autobiography. The fifth volume – *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes* – was published in August. **Jackie Kay** talked to her about her life, her work and her politics

***I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* was first published in the States by Random House; it wasn't published again here until 15 years later. I would be very interested to know exactly what was the response when it was first published in 1970?**

Well, within a week it was on the bestseller list, the national bestseller list, and it stayed there for some time.

Why do you think it took Britain so long to bring out a British edition?

British publishers, in fact established publishers, said in effect that my work would be of no interest to the British reading public although it had been offered from the very first, and my publisher, Random House, was consistently told every year at the International Bookmart, unfortunately no.

So I used to come to Britain, to England – I like London, and I have London friends – and in the pub or at parties people would ask me: 'What do you do?' And I'd say: 'I'm a writer', and they'd answer: 'Are you going to get anything published?' Books of mine sell hundreds of thousands in Europe, and so I'd say: 'Actually I'm a bit famous,' and they'd say: 'Oh go on, you're not published in Britain . . .'

When did you start writing?

Almost immediately. I mean my papers are at Lake Forrest University in North Carolina, letters from folks and important papers. Now I have papers, poems and prose I wrote at nine years old, which had been sent to Lake Forrest. Admittedly it may have been the worst poetry west of the Rockies, but there is something, you know.

I was interested to read that you refer to the Maya in your autobiographies as the 'Maya character', is that right? You think of her as a 'Maya character', not exactly the same as yourself? How difficult is it to maintain this distance?

Yes, very good. I didn't read that in any article. I don't believe anyone has ever asked me that. The person I was yesterday is not exactly the same as the person I am today, understandably. So, if that is so, then the person I write about 20 years ago knew only *that* much. Now, writing today, about somebody 20 years ago, one has to impose a kind of distance, otherwise I will imbue that person with the wisdom I have today.

That is the difficulty, in really writing autobiography as literature. You have to keep that distance and not even imply that this person knew what she was doing from the vantage point of 1987. No-one in the world has ever asked me that. That difficulty is probably the horn, the unicorny horn of the dilemma from which I spin, to try to keep that distance. And what is lovely, and I've never thought about this before, is that in writing poetry I can write from today. I can admit that I have now got wrinkles and now got this, and I now know better than I knew 20 years ago.

I think I am the only serious writer who has chosen the autobiographical form as the main form to carry my work, my expression. I pray that in each book I am getting closer to finding the mystery of really manipulating and being manipulated by this medium, to pulling it open, stretching it.

Memory is a fascinating thing, memory and time. You must be constantly thinking about how we edit memory, and that whole subject.

Well, it's fascinating. In truth, when I set out to write, I choose some sort of 'every-human-being' emotions, themes. So I will choose generosity, meanness of spirit, romantic love, loss of love, familiar love, ambition, greed, hate. And then I will set myself back in that time and try to see what incidents contained that particular theme. I may find seven. Some of them are too dramatic, I can't write them without being melodramatic you understand, so I say no, I won't write that one. Some are too weak. But I find one and I think, aha, this one. Now let me enchant myself back to that day or that month, or those months, so I can remember everything about that one incident. In that way the work is episodic, you see, but if I'm lucky and work hard it should flow so that it looks like just a story being told.

Protest is integral to your work and your life. Can you tell us what first politicised you? Or do you believe that black Americans have no other choice than to be fighters?

Well, there is no choice if you want to stay alive, otherwise you ally yourself with death and the end of action. Nothing in life stops, nothing. I don't know. I think we're all politicised and I couldn't say what was the first incident. It starts so early and it's so consistent.

So when you say you don't tolerate fools, that applies to you when you were young as well, doesn't it?

You see, what will happen, unfortunately, if we tolerate the fool, a person who really acts foolishly, will be that we ally ourselves with them. Sometimes a person will insult you, and if you respond he says: 'Oh I was just teasing.' Now quite often the person really wants you dead, maybe just for four minutes, and then he would resuscitate you. But what he means by those vicious remarks is *die*. Well, as soon as I hear it from anybody anywhere I say: 'Stop it, not me, this is my life, this is all I've got'.

In the 1960s, you worked alongside Dr Martin Luther King as a civil rights campaigner. I'd just like to hear more about that period from your point of view.

The period was absolutely intoxicating. The streets were filled with people who were on their toes, figuratively, with alertness. There was a promise in the air, like a delicious aroma of a wonderful soup being cooked in the kitchen on a cold day when you are hungry. It really appeared as if we were going to overcome racism, sexism, violence, hate.

So while it was strident, it was hopeful and it was as if there was a heaven in the air. It was a wonderful time.

And what has happened to the civil rights movement?

Well, it was derailed, understandably, by those, to quote Miss Margaret Walker: 'who tower over us omniscient-ly and laugh'.

Angela Davis was recently here in London,

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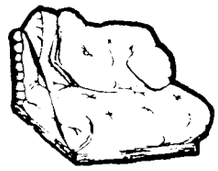
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'That's one of the gifts that black American women have, and try to share; always the humanity, the sweetness'

invited over by the ANC. What do you remember of the time when she was on America's Ten Most Wanted People's List?
Well naturally a number of people were involved in keeping her secure, because we knew it was a put-up job, just one more way to kill one of the leaders. After she was apprehended, Margaret Burnam, who is now a black judge, but was then a young lawyer and a sister friend of Angela's, got me in to see her. The way I could go in person was to be credited as a legal adviser. She was in a 'facility' which was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright – pink and blue nestled in the hills – what artistry! So I asked her once: 'Here you are, in this pretty palace, and what do you think?' She said: 'Girl, the joint is the joint.' And when she finally won her freedom, I interviewed her.

There was a popular television series in the States; the host gave it up for a year and six of us took it over. I could interview anyone I wanted for those six. So I interviewed Angela in her sister's kitchen. We just sat over coffee and biscuits and it was really sweet.

In August there was a rally in London to commemorate the 1956 South African women's march to Pretoria. That was just a year after Rosa Parks refused to go to the back of that bus in 1955. Do you feel you have a responsibility as an artist to record our heroes and heroines, our Rosa Parks and Ruby Doris figures?
Well, let me come back before I answer that please. One of the challenges for any radical (and I use the word to mean revolutionary, reformer) is to remain human and not to take on the trappings of the opposition and become dehumanised. That's very important. That's one of the gifts that black American women have, and try to share; always the humanity, the sweetness. And under oppression, kicking butt and taking names, they are still laughing sometimes and hugging. Very important.

Everything we do, I mean I don't know how broad that landscape is, is an action of recording. The impetus to record, I don't know whether that comes from the artists or whether artists are the recorder. That's two different things and yet they serve the same end. If I set out with the idea that I ought to record, then maybe my artistry suffers; if I set out with . . . I don't know. It's a very complex question. I do know that people live in direct relation to the heroes and she-roes they have.

In *Caged Bird*, you tell us that as a young girl you took responsibility for your rapist's death – which was the reason you became mute. Child abuse is now talked about more than it was then. Do you think this changes anything?
Well more often than not the victim, especially if you are a member of a depressed class or gender or sex, is loaded with the guilt for that action against herself or himself. It is always so. The young girl today is no less made to feel guilty or feels no less guilty than I did 40 years ago. And I know, I know too well, that the girls feel as much involved in the crime as the criminal.

When you were younger you never thought of white people as being real people; you thought that if you put your finger through them it would come out the other end. I find that fascinating and funny because it had such a strong spark of survival in it.
Well they didn't act like people in my little town in the South, they were so mean, you know. People laughed and people cried and people hugged each other and people got mad at each other and people rocked on the back porch or the front porch and sang and people loved children and they'd: 'Come here girl' and hug you all the time. Well, *they* didn't do anything like that, so I thought *they* weren't people.

In a recent article, which you wrote for The *Independent*, you describe a celebration you attended for the four black British MPs. You said the solidarity between black and white people gave you an incredible high. How important do you feel alliances with white people are?
We will all survive together or we will die together; it is imperative that we make alliances, sincere alliances. But you see the difficulty is only equals make friends; any other relationship is out of bounds, so if the white thinks that he is better than the black or the Asian, then the relationship can never be peer, then there can never be any friendship. If the black woman thinks she's better than the white woman there can never be any serious meeting point.

In the early 70s, Amiri Baraka wrote such things as the woman's role was to be feminine and submissive. How far do you think black male attitudes have changed since then, since the Black Panther movement?
That was an aberration which took place and black women for a while said: 'Okay, we'll see what you do with this', and it didn't happen. Black women said: 'No babe we don't take it like that,' and we don't, we haven't. We were sold together, bought together on the African continent, lay spoon fashion in the filthy hatchets of slave ships together, got up on the auction block together, stood together, sold again together, got up before sunrise, got up after sunset, together, worked those cane fields and cotton fields and the mines and all that together. Please, we are equal.

In your latest book, *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes*, you describe being in Ghana at the age of 33. You say: 'We had come home, and if home was not what we had expected, never mind, our need for belonging allowed us to ignore the obvious and to create real places or even illusory places, befitting our imagination.' This reminds me of a VS Naipaul story, where the narrator says: 'All landscapes are in the end only in the imagination; to be faced with the reality is to start again.'
You can never go home again, but the truth is you can never leave home, so it's all right. And yet it is innate in human nature to try to go home again, and it may in fact be what life is all about: getting back to home, back to death, and then out of death and back to life.

Many black British people today possess a kind of myth of return. They think that by returning to Africa, once they set foot on African soil, they will suddenly become whole again.
Everything will be all right!

Don't you think that's dangerous?
I think it's important, though it's good to have that, and it's good to go back. A part of that is true: you find that mores, customs, attitudes, melodies, rhythms which you thought came from Jamaica, or even from Britain, actually had their origins on that continent. And somehow you are made more strong.But you also find out, ah, I really am an American, I really am an African as well. But I am a new type of African, I am also an American, or I am also British, or I'm also Jamaican . . . I've found the source of so many things that I had not known to be other than black American, or even that I thought had originated due to slavery, you see, and that is encouraging and uplifting.

At the beginning of this interview, you said it is important to maintain the distance between who you are now and who you were then. Does the language you use in *Gather Together* to describe an encounter with two lesbians ('lecherous old hags,' and 'dirty things') relate to how you felt then? Has your attitude towards lesbians changed over the years?
Oh yes of course, but I mean I was 18 and they were old! They were 28. To me, I thought, well, at 18 you think anybody over 23 is a crone. I think I wouldn't have thought that, I wouldn't have been so mean, had I not sensed that they wanted to take advantage of me. And I felt that about anybody, anybody who wanted to take advantage of me. That has not changed; it has polished a bit. Had they been two men, or two anybodys, who wanted to outwit me, I would have been the same. Even then I had an aunt who was gay, who was a lesbian, and who I loved, and who helped me raise my son, Guy.

When you were young, you had a fear of being a lesbian yourself, didn't you?
Yes, I thought if I was going to be a lesbian I was going to live this sad life that was written about in *The Well of Loneliness*.

Loneliness and more loneliness!
I told my mum when I thought I was going to be a lesbian; I sat on the side of her bed and told her my vulva was growing. My mum said: 'What no, get the dictionary,' and she said: 'This is very natural.' And so I was quite relieved. But about 10 years later, my son Guy came to me, he was about 10, and he said: 'Mum I want to ask you something. What do you think about lesbians'. I said: 'Lesbians, Jesus, I don't'. He says: 'Well I'm going to tell you something: Aunt Lottie is a lesbian but if you don't change the way you treat her I'll never speak to you again!' Obviously, I support any group which means to survive and make a better world.●

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John Sturrock/Network

Hammond (EETPU) Kentoon and Lynk (UDM) round the table; New Unionism drawing up the agenda for the 1990s?

Unions Go To Market

The unions are in a state of paralysis. **Charlie Leadbeater** argues they need a strategy which could reconcile social interests with international competitiveness as the first step along the road to renewal

The British trade unions are in a state of structural paralysis, unable to find a role in a society which has moved away from them in a fundamental sense.

That shift was symbolised by Labour's third successive defeat. The unions would have benefited enormously from the return of a Labour government committed to lowering unemployment, boosting public spending and repealing most of the Tories' anti trade union legislation. But the unions' crisis is not merely the product of Labour's political failure, nor the Tories' ideological assault.

The unions are also facing sustained organisational pressures at the grassroots of the economy. These indices of the unions' problems are well known. Declining membership through high unemployment; a further shift in employment towards non-unionised sectors and locations; and the growth of a poorly organised peripheral workforce. Backed by favourable legislation, and mass unemployment, many employers are becoming more assertive, demanding changes in working practices, and marginalising unions.

But the unions' crisis is neither purely practical and organisational, nor purely political. It will not be solved by the return of a Labour government nor by a simple rebuilding of organisational strength on the ground.

The unions' paralysis is linked to one fundamental problem. That is: to show how efficiency and market competitiveness, the preconditions for individual prosperity in an increasingly marketised society, can be reconciled with the labour movement's social goals such as providing workers with protection against the harshness of the market. Only when the unions are able to show that these social goals do not stand in the way of, or even contribute to, competitiveness, growth and individual prosperity, will they once again be able to command an authoritative role within society.

Underlying the unions' paralysis is a fundamental shift in what people think efficiency consists of and how efficiency, and thereby individual prosperity, can be delivered.

In the postwar years the state played a vital role in managing the economy, to promote efficiency, growth and rising living standards. Many people now believe that that task is beyond government, that it rests more narrowly with companies becoming more competitive, paying their way in the world. It is best to leave companies to decide how best to become more efficient to fight off competition. These are the real economic decisions which will determine whether people have jobs in the future. Not the decisions made by civil ser-

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vants, and politicans, about how to manipulate the abstract financial aggregates which are the tools of demand management.

But it is not just the view of how good economic decisions should be made which has changed. The content of the idea of efficiency has also changed.

In the postwar years there was some kind of social ideal of efficiency. That is that growth should lead to widely spread benefits, through full employment and the welfare state, growth and efficiency had a social purpose. Social costs, such as redundancy and unemployment, had to be taken into account in the pursuit of efficiency.

In contrast, the current view of efficiency is much narrower. Company profitability is the vital measure and purpose of efficiency. It is only through companies remaining efficient, and competitive, that workers can be assured continuing employment and rising living standards. Companies argue they have little or no responsibility for redundancies made in the name of profitability. With companies claiming they cannot be responsible for anything beyond their four walls, and the government disavowing any capacity or responsibility for reducing unemployment, the whole idea of social obligation, that growth should serve a social end, rather than narrow profit, goes down the drain.

The social ideal of efficiency had a powerful influence over how the postwar economy was run and organised. It also gave the unions an authoritative, powerful role.

Through their influence on the corporatist state, the unions were able to pursue the larger social vision of combining economic growth with management of the market, to provide workers with some security. This reconciliation of social goals with economic efficiency showed that the unions could deliver the former without endangering the latter.

This influence at the level of the state went hand in hand with strength at the base. Full employment, a sympathetic legal framework, gave unions the industrial muscle to deliver in the narrow tasks of wage bargaining and the like. The continued growth of the economy gave them a justification for flexing their muscle. The sustained growth of the long postwar boom meant they could press for more without endangering efficiency, growth and prosperity.

The unions did not have to worry about developing a wider social role in their grassroots activities, as that was taken care of through the corporatist, full employment, welfare state. But nor did they really have to address where they stood in relation to basic productive efficiency, for that seemed to be taken care of by the dynamics of continual growth.

So at both levels the unions delivered. Their interests were not at odds with rising living standards. Indeed for many, the unions were a vital route to winning higher living standards, both through their strength in wage bargaining and their role in ensuring the state stuck by demand management aimed at maintaining full employment. The extent of the unions' strength is easy to forget. An entirely random look at back copies of the *Financial Times*' labour reporting from 1968, yielded these two headlines to front page lead stories, published within a couple of weeks of each other: 'Mr Wilson puts 2am peace plan to railmen', followed by 'Chancellor rejects TUC demand for 6% growth rate.' Recently Ron Todd, the Transport and General Workers Union's general secretary, recalled winning a four-week strike at Ford, Dagenham, in 1973, over the management's decision to speed up the line. Such a strike would be unimaginable now.

In contrast to their strength during the postwar boom, consider what the unions can deliver now. They have virtually no influence over the state. As John Edmonds, the general secretary of the GMB, puts it: 'What is the point of writing a budget submission for a chancellor who does not read the front page?' The unions' wider social goals were delivered primarily through the state. With the political route to fulfilment of that vision cut off, it seems to imply relinquishing the vision itself as a credible goal.

And the unions continue to be weak on the ground. The measure of success in industrial action has changed dramatically. The National Communications Union, for instance, came out of its three-week strike earlier this year with British Telecom, judging it a success because the union had not split apart.

More fundamentally, the unions are seen by many as at best irrelevant, at worst obstacles to the generation of prosperity in the modern marketised world.

While union members' earnings still outstrip those of non-unionised workers in a similar position, the unions are generally not seen to be providers of this prosperity. Workers may not trust managements more than they used to; they may not like adjusting to changed working practices. But there is a realistic resignation to the fact that continued employment and rising living standards are founded on competitiveness and efficiency. Workers may not like this situation, but there is little sign that unions are going to be able to change it for them.

For the British unions have been boxed into a corner. The Tories may not be able to present them as the scourges of yesteryear. The unions are just very, very quiet, for they have no strong voice. They are unable to make any strategic intervention in the restructuring of the economy. The unions are presented as sectional interests, which have nothing positive to say about the creation of an economy which can pay its way in the world, and thereby guarantee its workers have jobs. All they can do is feebly stand in its way from time to time. For the unions face a seemingly impossible dilemma, in a society which is increasingly dominated by the logic of the competitive market.

The growth in competitiveness in recent years has been delivered with the unacceptable costs of mass unemployment, growing inequalities and division. It has also been made possible through a decisive shift in the balance of power towards managers. To endorse that efficiency which is the well spring of affluence and security for workers, is to endorse policies which have led to mass unemployment. To attempt to engage with it implies accepting management's terms, to acquiesce in the naked, capitalist project.

But to argue that the Tories' management of the economy has been a disaster hardly accords with the economic experience of the affluent working class. They escaped the axe in the recession, and are benefiting from the restructuring and rationalisation which has taken place since. Their real earnings gains in the last few years have outstripped anything produced under the last Labour government. Edmonds' retort to this argument is: 'I do not meet many people who have done well out of Thatcherism.' But that is not a solution to the problem. It is precisely the problem – British unions seem structurally incapable of speaking for, or even to, those workers who have done well out of the competitive market economy. Moreover, it says nothing about how unions think an internationally competitive economy should be run to meet social goals given the unlikelihood that demand management alone could deliver a full employment guarantee.

'There is a strong lingering distrust that the labour movement does not have a credible strategy to deliver security and prosperity via efficiency and growth'

There is a strong lingering distrust that the labour movement really does not have a credible strategy to ensure security and prosperity via efficiency and growth. Demand management alone will not deliver it. And the labour movement seems to have nothing to say about how the real, productive economy should be made efficient and competitive. Until the unions can once again show that their interests and influence can be reconciled with, or even foster grassroots efficiency and competitiveness, they will not command an authoritative role within society. Finding a way to do this, on terrain very different from the postwar era, is the strategic task for the unions.

In the postwar settlement, growth, efficiency and prosperity were reconciled, through the state's role, with the labour movement's goals of ensuring that growth had a social purpose, delivering security to workers and a general increase in living standards. The reinstatement of that kind of overreaching political settlement remains vital for the unions. But the present and forseeable political terrain demands that the unions cannot realisti-

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'The unions need to reach a political settlement within industry which could offer some hope that efficiency and competitiveness could be reconciled with social interests'

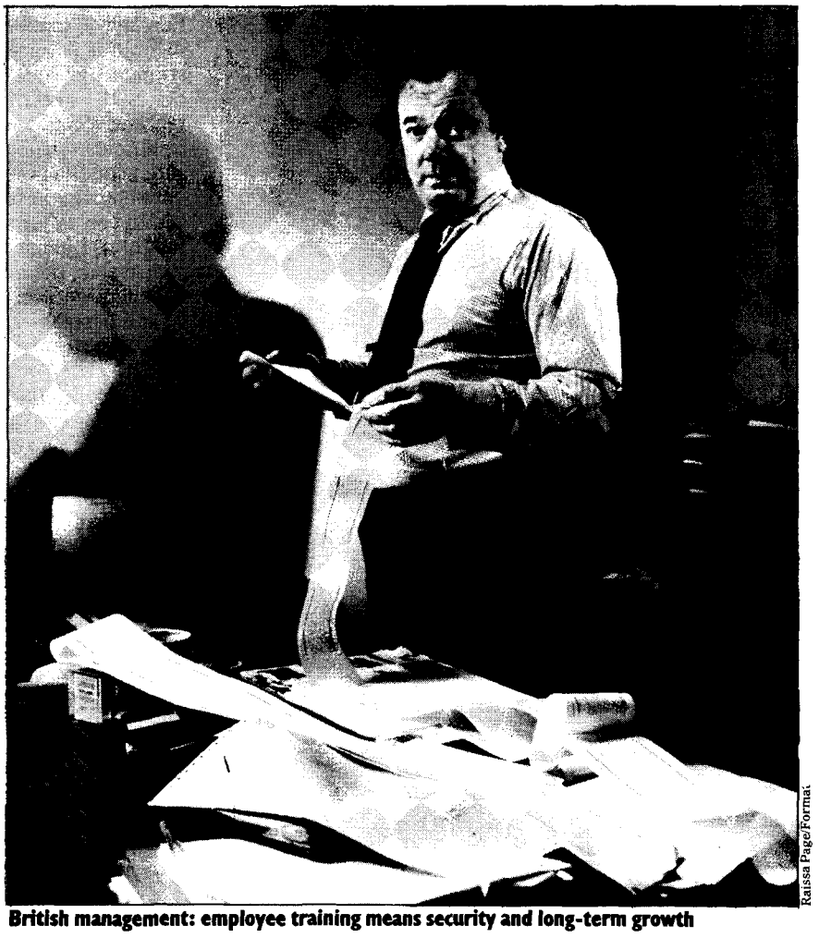

Photo: Rajssa Page/Format

British management: employee training means security and long-term growth

cally seek a settlement at the level of the state. Their reliance, in the postwar period, on the state to regulate the economy from the *outside*, meant that they never developed a strategy to embed that social vision from the *inside*. The unions must now attempt to develop a strategy for delivering an alternative form of political settlement. That is a political settlement within industry, rather than at the level of the state. They must attempt in a strategic way to embed their social goals for a more civilised form of economy within the real, nut, bolts, and microchip economy. It must become a feature of the productive economy and the culture of work, rather than solely a feature of the political framework.

This is not an interim task, not a tactical holding position. It is a strategic task. The pressures for international competitiveness will not go away despite possible changes of government. Unless the unions can find a way to engage with demands for competitiveness, and yet deliver social benefits, they will increasingly lose any sense of purpose or power within the market economy.

One union which does claim to have a recipe for reaching a settlement within industry is the EETPU, the electricians' union.

The union is prepared to foster flexible working practices; simplified collective bargaining arrangements, including company councils; no strike deals, centred on extended, mandatory arbitration to settle disputes. The leadership justifies this strategy by arguing that the unions must recognise they represent workers in companies operating in highly competitive markets. The unions can only pursue their members' interests through the market, not by trying to stand in its way. The union's approach, however unconventional or controversial, produces agreements which contribute to higher productivity, greater efficiency and thereby security for workers.

Certainly the union is one of the few to take initiatives with a positive, assertive view of where it is going. But for many, the EETPU's strategy is old wine in new bottles. It is a modernised version of old-style, right-wing, conservative, instrumental, economistic bargaining. Moreover, the union goes too far in conceding to management. The strike-free deals, and other elements of the electricians' packages, involve selling crucial workers' rights. But attacking the EETPU for being a boss's union, is no substitute for an alternative strategy.

Such strategies do exist elsewhere. In West Germany the union movement has been able to withstand the Kohl government much more successfully than the British unions have withstood the Thatcher governments. One reason for this is that the West German unions are written into the character of the productive economy in a much more positive, assertive way than their British counterparts. Recent comparative studies of technological change in the car industry, for instance, have shown that West German unions have a much greater say on the issue than British unions. While the TUC complains of an increasing number of employers willing to marginalise unions, in West Germany many employers willingly accept consultation with unions over plans to modernise production as a fact of economic organisation.

IG Metall, the largest union, has consistently shown it is productivist, in the sense that it is willing to foster improvements in efficiency and competitiveness. But it also has a larger social vision which it pursuit independently of political parties. This is centred on its pursuit of a shorter working week, in an attempt to ensure that the gains from higher productivity and efficiency bring social benefits. For the employed, shorter hours help improve the quality of working life, but the reduction in working time also helps to alleviate unemployment.

Moreover, this does not go with weakness, judged in the narrow sense of industrial muscle. The union has gone through two major disputes in recent years, and emerged with gains which would be the envy of British unions. But the real strength of IG Metall is not its industrial muscle. It is that its power is set within a strategic view of its role within the productive, market economy.

In contrast, the British unions seem bereft of a vision of how they can pursue any social purpose within a competitive, market economy. As Edmonds told the *Financial Times* recently: 'We have replaced a fairly negative image with no clear-cut image at all. We've reduced the unpopularity by being more careful. But have we put anything attractive, and forceful in its place? No we haven't.' The danger, he continued, was that without a forceful strategy, employees would fail to see the need to join unions, and employers will see no need to recognise them.

The paralysis of the British unions is perhaps best symbolised at the moment by the National Union of Mineworkers. The 1984-5 strike was essentially a fight to reinstate the social criterion of efficiency that operated under the postwar consensus. The miners argued that social costs, of redundancies and the massacre of communities, should take precedence over the narrow financial considerations of the profitability of particular pits, and the need to align coal supply with demand. That strike failed in that end. The NUM now faces British Coal's demand for flexible shift patterns, longer daily shifts, and six-day coal production, to cut costs and remain competitive. The union seems faced with the unenviable choice of losing jobs whichever way it goes. If flexible shifts are introduced, productivity will rise, but costs are unlikely to fall enough

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'Unions should use employee share ownership and involvement schemes'

to generate new markets for extra output. So jobs will be lost through productivity gains. But if they do not introduce flexible shifts, then jobs will be lost anyway, as a privatised electricity supply industry turns to cheaper energy sources. So jobs will be lost through declining market share.

Appealing to an external political framework, to remove this awful choice through state management of the transition, is no longer an option. The NUM will have to create an alternative political settlement within the industry itself. That means attempting to ensure that, as far as possible, British Coal's drive for higher competitiveness is directed towards social benefits, especially in terms of shorter working time. If the union does not pursue such a strategy, it will end up deeply divided and fundamentally weakened.

So how could the unions go about establishing a political settlement within industry which would attempt to reconcile efficiency, competitiveness and growth with social interests?

They will need a comprehensive response to restructuring. At the core of such a strategy would have to be policies covering working time; ownership and control; training and industrial modernisation.

The reduction and reorganisation of working time will be a crucial part of successful union strategies over the next decade or more. Franz Steinkuehler, IG Metall's leader, told the *Financial Times* recently: 'The 35-hour week will be agreed. That is our goal for the 1990s. We shall go into the next decade with a 35-hour week.'

Reductions in working time would attack a number of the unions' problems. Cuts in working time would help to unify the unions' membership base by closing the gaps between different segments of the labour force.

If full time workers' hours were further reduced, the gap between full-timers and the growing army of peripheral workers, part-timers, temporary workers, self-employed freelancers, would narrow. Unions might be more able to build common interests between them. The same applies to the distinction between blue and white-collar workers. New technology in manufacturing is often blurring that line as skilled manual workers often take on jobs traditionally done by white collar staff. Nevertheless, blue and white collar workers often work very different hours within the week and year. Harmonisation of hours for blue and white collar workers is not something that stands in the way of technological change; it is being hastened by technological change.

Cuts in working time are crucial in the light of the increasingly wide and rapid diffusion of new, microelectronic technology. Even core workers who have done well during the later Thatcher years are still vulnerable to losing their

John Sturrock/Network

Lack of vision in the labour movement

jobs as a result of technological change. Cuts in working time are one way to offer them security. But a reduction in working time would also appeal to affluent workers as consumers. It would expand the sphere of free time away from work where they feel powerful, successful, free in some sense. This applies in general but also at particular points in people's working lives. Improved paternity and maternity leave would be a vital contribution to the family/home-centred world. More flexible forms of retirement would ease the transition from work to non-work.

Though cuts in working time would have costs, they would not in principle stand in the way of efficient restructuring. Reductions in working time would also help to alleviate unemployment. To that extent they are vital as part of a wider social vision – that the productivity gains from new technology and restructuring should not just lead to higher profits but to social benefits.

A second element would be to start pressing again for greater influence over investment and production. The general drift toward private ownership in housing, stocks and shares and the economy at large should be utilised to press workers' claims for a say over restructuring, investment and production. Companies are already recognising the need to integrate their workers more fully into business goals through employee involvement programmes, quality circles, and employee share-ownership. Companies are now reliant on smaller workforces to do a wider range of jobs, like improving quality and customer service. If companies are making an effort to integrate their workers more into the business, it is surely a sign that they recognise that smaller, more skilled workforces have a greater claim for influence over production.

While unions are rightly suspicious of this move toward employee involvement, it is not going to go away. It will stimulate greater interest among workers in the overall business they work for, and it could generate challenges to traditional structures of managerial authority. But to do that, the unions have to mobilise these potential demands within an alternative view. Unions should use employee share ownership plans and involvement schemes to stimulate workers to seek more of a say in their businesses.

IG Metall, for instance, has co-operated with Ford's employee involvement programme because it believes it could give the union some influence over production decisions, which were previously excluded from collective bargaining. As Herr Steinkuehler says: 'Workers in West Germany are the best trained ever. They have had 10 years at school and up to four years training. You cannot expect them not to have a say in their means of existence.'

Training is a third element which needs to be taken much more seriously. British employers, unlike their West German counterparts, are extremely vulnerable on this issue. There is a growing broad consensus that British employers are doing too little training. Not only will this inhibit economic growth and efficiency. Under-training makes workers more vulnerable to job loss. Better training will enhance security, and long-term earnings growth. A CBI-sponsored working party is likely to recommend that managers should have up to 10 days off-the-job training per year. Why should this not be a workers' demand or right? Workers' demands for more training is not just compatible with higher efficiency but is a precondition for it.

Finally, unions need to take a much broader view of how to represent workers' interests within a view of how an industry or sector should develop efficiently.

One of the few to do that in the private sector is TASS, the manufacturing union. It has attempted to set its case within a broader view of how an industry like aerospace or vehicle manufacturing should be developed. In articulating its view of how efficiency should be fostered it seeks to stand for, and win the support of, a constituency outside the union.

Although the National Union of Teachers has produced documents on its policy for the education service, one of the notable features of the lengthy teachers' strike was the union's failure to articulate a clear, alternative view of how the service should develop to provide a better product for its consumers.

NUPE, the public sector union, has also begun to claim a role in debates about health care *per se*, rather than the industrial relations of the NHS. In doing so, it is seeking to stand on the side of consumers, to show that quality of service in these areas is vitally wrapped

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up with how workers are treated and services funded.

Elaborating these kinds of views will be crucial if unions are to counter the Tories' claim that unions stand for sectional interests and against efficiency in the name of value for money for the nation as a whole.

A test case for the labour movement in this area will be the debate over the future of British Telecom. The mounting consumer disenchantment against BT provides an important reservoir of potential support for a new policy towards BT. But merely reiterating the need to return BT to public ownership will not mobilise these disenchanted consumers behind the labour movement's approach.

The first requirement of the labour movement's plans for BT should be that they will give the consumer a more efficient service. There should be tighter controls on BT to ensure that it delivers a public service to the old, the isolated, the unprofitable. The labour movement also needs to articulate a view of how public investment in BT will aid the development of the information technology industry. For BT will provide the infrastructure for the emerging information technology economy, just as rail provided the infrastructure for the 19th century economy.

But at the end of the day, the labour movement will also have to explore ways to put BT under some competitive pressure to deliver a better service to consumers. For whether it is privately or publicly owned, one of the main reasons that BT is able to take consumers for granted is that it is an enormous, lumbering, bureaucratic monopoly. If some acceptable measure of competition can be introduced, for instance through a system like the ITV network franchises which are reviewed every few years, then labour stands some chance of winning over sceptical consumers. Come what may, the labour movement's plans for the largest company in Britain will be a test case for its approach to the productive economy in general. The movement will have to show that it can combine its social goals of providing a public service and protecting workers, with the need to promote efficiency, competitiveness and value for money for consumers.

The postwar settlement emerged from a period of hard bargaining between labour and capital. That bargaining took place in a period of fundamental economic restructuring during the 30s reaching its apogee in the second world war. During that restructuring, the industrialised world adjusted from the coal-based technologies of the 19th century to the new technologies based on oil and electricity. These were the 'core' technologies that spawned the mass consumer industries of household goods, motor cars and the like. It was these mass consumption industries which formed the industrial base for the postwar boom and the postwar settlement.

'Cuts in working time would help to unify the unions' membership base'

The industrialised economies are going through a similar transformation in the core technologies which make them tick – namely, information technology and microelectronics. The unions should conceive their long-term task within that transformation. Once again they are going through a period of bargaining with capital which will determine the lines of an eventual settlement. They have to establish a new settlement on a new industrial and technological base.

It is essential unions develop a strategy for a settlement within industry, in an attempt to ensure that modernising restructuring does work to social interests.

This is only one element of an overall strategy. A new settlement within industry is a precondition for a new settlement at the level of the state. And action at the level of the state remains vital to ensure once again that economic growth does bring widely spread social benefits. A new settlement could well emerge over the next five to 10 years, but given the labour movement's lack of vision, it is likely to be predominantly on the terms of employers. Building a base for a more acceptable settlement requires a strategy to embed some social vision in the productive economy. Without such a strategy what role do the unions have? ●

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Coalfield Conundrums

The political situation at the coalface is rapidly deteriorating, even when compared with the aftermath of the 1984-5 strike. **Hywel Francis** here argues that the NUM has to face the future with a willingness to listen

NUM: facing decentralised control

The words: 'Until he is given safety in the mines, adequate compensation, hours of labour that do not make him a mere coal-getting medium, decent living conditions, there will be no peace in the British coalfields' could have been those of Arthur Scargill, president of the NUM, at the recent annual conference.

They were, in fact, those of his hero, A J Cook, the great and passionate leader of the British miners, speaking after the miners' defeat of 1926.

There are, these days, many well-meaning people living far away from the coalfields who are bemused and confused by this passion which still boils over in our communities as witnessed in recent strikes in Yorkshire and also in South Wales earlier in the year. 'Of course, there was a defeat,' they usually say, 'but why do you feel so *wounded* by what has happened to the NUM and the miners?' It is not just anger. This is a passion encompassing a system of beliefs which are generations old in our coalfields. They were best described at a recent funeral of a young man, the son of a miner. The officiating minister spoke of the importance of the open-hand and the clenched fist as complementary symbols of friendship and struggle, of peace and justice, and most of all, of solidarity – a willingness to help others less fortunate at home and the world over.

The same minister once told me that he organised a meeting of religious leaders in Wales during the miners' strike. The theme was 'reconciliation' and there was an observer from South Africa. Asked to comment on what he had heard, the black minister said: 'How can you seek reconciliation without first struggling for justice?'

It is that fine sense of justice, a class and trade union consciousness, which still gives miners and their communities a sense of belief in the NUM, despite all the horrendous problems currently besetting them. Peter Heathfield, the NUM general secretary, recently put it very precisely when discussing the newly imposed controversial code of conduct: 'British Coal has overlooked the fact that mining communities are underpinned by a culture based on cooperation and not on competition.'

Recognising injustices and feeling passionate about rebelling against them is an instinctive reaction for activists, especially in the British labour movement. The return of a Conservative government must, however, make the most dedicated pause for thought. A commitment to an expanded civil nuclear programme, privatisation of electricity – and the very strong possibility of British Coal going the same way not long afterwards – all this can be seen as new, or at least more imminent.

Added to this is the continued existence of the breakaway Union of Democratic Mineworkers and British Coal's ability, largely because of this, to impose wages and conditions (including new technology, a new controversial code of conduct and even flexible working). All this points to a rapidly changing and deteriorating situation, compared even with the situation immediately after the 1984-85 strike.

New circumstances dictate new strategies. 'Forward ever' is hardly a sound perspective when faced with the advancing hordes. There is a growing, if as yet imperceptible, change in outlook.

Of all the statements made by miners' leaders since March 1985, the three most significant could well have been made this July.

Firstly, there was Jack Taylor, president of the Yorkshire miners, who, on behalf of his executive, called for the unofficial strikes against the new code of conduct to end immediately for the sake of 'unity and discipline'. In that one pregnant phrase is encapsulated a realisation that the forces against even the most powerful coalfield cannot be overcome by the old industrial tactic of bouncing, rolling, spontaneous strikes. Secondly, there was George Rees, general secretary of the South Wales miners, who at the NUM annual conference warned against 'tunnel vision'.

There was a need to be aware of a rapidly changing industry and a changing world in which social and political attitudes were not at all those embodied in fine sounding union conference resolutions. And finally there was George Bolton, the new president of the Scottish miners, who, at the same conference, did not make himself popular with some by telling delegates that British Coal was powerful enough to introduce new technology and flexible working without NUM approval. These three leaders potentially represent a new trend of thinking and action within the NUM leadership that is not afraid to break out of past positions and take a grip of a runaway situation.

It is quite conceivable that a new programme, indeed a new miners' charter, could well begin to be formulated which addresses the day-to-day issues facing miners and their families in all coalfields. The first priority is to create a sense of the future, a belief in a secure future, by sustaining and developing modern coalfields which allow for training and retraining in new technology. Such a new technology

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Val Wilmer/Format

agreement, which is central to the personal and collective development of the miner into the 1990s, is an immediate priority. But with it go all the problems of flexible working and changed work practices which beset all workers in capitalist and socialist countries. It is the task of a modern union to face the problems head-on. Otherwise we will have another Fleet Street/Wapping scenario.

Alongside this is the whole question of defending and advancing members' conditions of service. The union is obviously both a shield of protection and a means of extracting better terms, even in difficult circumstances. The acceptance of a new conciliation agreement which puts members' interests first, before any misgivings about sitting down with the representatives of the UDM breakaway, is obviously a difficult but inevitable step to take. Beyond all this is a fragmentation of national bargaining. What happens if and when Exxon or Rio Tinto Zinc buy up chunks of our coalfields? Will the NUM be capable of allowing relatively strong areas such as Yorkshire or South Wales to negotiate under national guidelines the best possible conditions to try to set standards for smaller and weaker coalfields? The pattern of ownership and control is being simultaneously decentralised and internationalised and the NUM must respond to these changes as other unions are already doing.

'If some unity of action can be achieved between the NUM and NACODS, then a merger with the UDM, with some political courage, is only around the corner'

There is also a need to speak the unspoken. Since 1985, there has been an awful void between members' needs and the union's position on the question of a redundancy agreement. Will the NUM accept the need to negotiate the best possible redundancy arrangements to take account of improved retraining, decent, skilled work opportunities for women and all young people, improved community facilities and full security for miners and their families when they finally retire?

The crisis of membership decline in the NUM and the simultaneous management offensive is not something that is peculiar to the coal industry. The TUC has recently instituted the first review of its structures and objectives in decades, simply because of the lost millions under Thatcherism.

Within this wider context, the miners can be seen as suffering alongside other trade unionists. Privatisation, new codes of conduct, the speed of application of new technology and flexible working are problems being faced by millions of other British workers in the 1980s. The need then is not to assume a conspiracy against the NUM but to formulate a realistic and credible strategy which helps break down its isolation from other unions, and the first stage of that must be the rebuilding of unity within the industry and simultaneously with other energy and transport workers. It is rather encouraging to note the close working relationship between the NUM and NACODS leaderships since the strike. What the respective rank and file think of the possibility of a merger, given recent history, is anyone's guess. If some unity of action can be achieved between the NUM and NACODS, then a merger with the UDM, with some political courage, is only around the corner. An energy workers' union is also on the agenda within the next five years.

But these manoeuvrings for unity, even with other energy and transport unions, women's groups, environmental, community and peace organisations, can have no real meaning unless there is an acceptance at every level of the NUM that it is facing greater difficulties now than at any time in its history. A call *only* for an industrial revolt would be suicidal. The headline in the *Morning Star* (July 24, 1987) on the coal industry, 'Miners Prepare to Fight' betrays the difference between rebels and revolutionaries.

What is now needed is a period of discussion about industrial and political strategy which recognises the very changed circumstances. Anyone who believes they have all the answers cannot be taken seriously. A willingness, however, to listen is the first stage in the building of a credible programme of action for all energy workers and their communities. There is also a need to accept a certain inevitability. Whether we like it or not, the British coalfields are being sucked into a world – predominantly capitalist – energy market. The prospect of black South African miners and white British miners sharing the same employer is imminent. There is also a certain inevitability about flexible working and new technology. But how these changes are ameliorated for the benefit of members depends on whether the NUM is prepared to make difficult and awkward compromises.

In 1984, Christopher Hill, the English historian of the 17th century, wrote of the consequences of defeat in 1660 for the Cromwellian revolution: 'The experience of defeat meant recognising the collapse of the system of ideas which had previously sustained action, and attempting new explanations, new perspectives.'[1] And in that new process of discovery, some reflections on the passion for peace and justice – and for struggle and mercy – would not go amiss in extending the open hand of friendship and the clenched fist of solidarity towards the UDM. It is the first step on the long march back to recovery. But that will require political courage, which the NUM, in the past, has never lacked. ●

[1] Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and Some Contemporaries* (1984), p17.

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Left Turns Across Europe

A Roundtable Discussion

The confidence which marked the European Left in the 1970s has evaporated. But, a decade after the rise of Eurocommunism, a rethinking of traditional strategies is under way, in which communist parties are playing a critical role

The participants in the roundtable are: Marcus Bakker, former president of the Communist Party of the Netherlands; Luciana Castellina, a member of the central committee of the Communist Party of Italy and a member of the European parliament; José Palau, member of the central committee of the Communist Party of Spain, responsible for peace and international work; and Gudrun Schyman, member of the central committee of the Left Party-Communists of Sweden and responsible for peace activity. The discussion was chaired by Jon Bloomfield, a member of the executive committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and took place during the recent END convention in Coventry.

In the mid 70s there was plenty of optimism both in the communist movement and the Left in Europe about how things were progressing. A decade later this has disappeared. Why do you think this is so, and, particularly, why have the communist parties suffered more in this process than others?

Luciana I think the whole Left has suffered, not just the communist parties. The whole Left has suffered because of the way the Right reacted to the world crisis. Instead of a conservative reaction the Right reacted in a new way and embarked on a deep restructuring process and a cultural counter-offensive. The Left was unable to respond to this. A series of changes have been brought about in the structure of power, the distribution of income, and the redistribution and dislocation of traditional powers. So we were facing a totally new situation. We were late in understanding what the situation really was. We were involved in the old defensive battles and were unable to react in a creative way. And this is true for the social democratic parties as well as for the communist parties.

Gudrun I think all political parties have suffered, not only the Left. In the 80s people react differently to political parties. They think the parties are unable to deal with the new kinds of problems, the global problems. But it is especially a problem for the left parties – we get our support from radical people, and radical people object to the conventional way of dealing with problems.

And now that issues increasingly take a global form, it's hard for national parties to deal with international problems, to internationalise questions in a national context, such as elections.

But isn't there a specific problem, that communist parties have found it harder, because of their structures and their traditions and their theory, to respond to this situation and keep up with popular movements?

José Yes, but in a particular way. But first, the more general question. We were facing a powerful offensive from the Right, economically, culturally and ideologically. And at the same time – which was a coincidence, not a result of the Right's offensive – the complexity of our societies has made it increasingly evident that there are now demands for new ways of participating in politics for new generations. New political problems have emerged which lie outside the traditional concerns of the Left and marxism. The coincidence of these things has made it worse than if either one had happened separately. The problem we face is that there is no clear left transforming alternative in the face of this right wing offensive. This has been a problem for the whole Left.

Now when you say it has been more dramatic for the communists, you mean that some socialist parties have reacted better. But they have only reacted better in as much as they have adjusted themselves into being simply administrators of the situation. This is what has happened with the Spanish Socialists, who have acted as a sort of national party more than as a socialist party, seeking to occupy all the political spaces – centre, moderate right and left. This has been on the basis of not having any clear policies on anything. In contrast, when the French Socialists were first in government and made radical changes, they immediately got into difficulties. All the social democrat and socialist parties who are deeply concerned in the debate on how to renew a left policy, such as the Labour Party and the West German SPD, have problems.

Is it true, Marcus, of the Dutch Labour Party?

Marcus One of the great changes has been a big shift in the attitude of social democrats. 15 years ago, when we started the campaign against the neutron bomb, the social democrats were against it. They were still strongly allied with the United States. But now their attitude has changed. And there has been a tremendous change within

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social democracy in nearly all Western European countries on this issue. American policy no longer enjoys a strong hold. This change, when you think about it, has been enormous given the short time, let's say since Vietnam.

There are now many social democrats in the peace movement – that was unthinkable 10 years ago. So objectively, for most people, the choice is between a mighty social democratic party which has a very good chance of entering government and a small communist party, which on many questions has similar politics to the social democrats, in a situation where the crisis in some socialist countries has been coming to a head, during the Brezhnev period. This was an unequal contest. Communism was not very attractive. If I had been 18 at the beginning of the 80s I don't know whether I would have made the same choice that I made during the second world war. And then there were the changes in communist parties. Absolutely necessary, but they were terribly difficult. Party culture had to be changed fundamentally. It was natural that parties went through crisis.

Do you feel that we've come out of that now?

José I think we have overcome the first step, which is accepting the problems. I don't think we have solved them.

Gudrun There is certainly a new atmosphere. There's an open way of taking up questions, an openness to social movements that wasn't there before. There's an openness towards an independent peace movement, for example, which wasn't there in my party five years ago.

But clearly this has been achieved at great cost. Just look at the internal rifts within my own party or in Spain, for example, with the difficulties of a changing leadership. And we now see serious problems within the French Communist Party. Doesn't this suggest that there are major problems for communist parties in how they try to come to terms with today's world? Many, after all, have split.

Luciana I wouldn't say that we have more problems than the social democrats. But there is something new in recent years – as far as I can see, there is a new debate going on which is very similar in the social democratic parties and in most of the communist parties. Although it's difficult to generalise because the parties are not all the same. What is new is that there is a common debate in the Left in Europe. There is a divide in the debate, but this divide no longer goes along the traditional boundaries, which were socialist and communist. This divide cuts through the social democrats as well as the communists. It's a new sort of debate and it is about new issues.

Marcus: 'Communist parties are fundamentally educators'

Luciana: 'None of us expected a phenomenon like Gorbachev'

I think most of us now agree that power has to be taken, achieved, through consensus, so the question of how you take power is no longer an issue. Most of us agree now that it has to be achieved through majorities, consensus – the electoral process, let's call it. Changes have to be brought about through consensus and through a gradual process. But once you say this, it is not the end of the problem because you can conceive those reforms in different ways: reforms could be seen as a gradual transformation, with the intention of a transformation of society's structures and its values; or reforms can simply be seen as an adjustment to the present system. This is the discussion. And when I look at the debates going on in the West German SPD (which is in many ways a similar party to the Italian Communist Party, because of its size, the way it's been organised and other similarities) I see the same debate. And you have the same positions on one side and the other side.

But does that readjustment, those new lines of debate, mean that what used to be conceived of as the European communist movement no longer exists?

Luciana I think it's very difficult to speak about a communist movement because of the very great differences which exist between the different parties, and the way they are in their own societies. But on the whole I think we can say that we have more and more similar debate on the European Left. But of course it is true that for the communists this brings about a problem, which is a new problem, and that is to define the role of the communists in all this. I tend to believe that the problem is that we are in a new stage. The debate is no longer between the communists and the socialists. There is a new debate in the Left. Now of course you can enter this debate saying that we were all wrong and we now have to admit that the social democrats were right, or you can say that they were not right and we were not right and that we all have to find new ways. But this is something else. Should we accept 'the third way', by which we mean that the old experiences of the labour movement have to be rethought?

José I agree with that but I would not only speak about social democrats and communists. There are also other things. The green movement and the peace movement are also part of political reality. Now this leads me to another point: some communist parties have had problems in recent years, especially my party, because we thought we could overcome the difficulties, the new situations, just by being very moderate, by trying to explain that we were not going to change things as much as communists were expected to, with the idea that we would occupy part of the traditional space of the socialists. We didn't succeed in doing that. And another result of this is that radicalism has expressed itself in other ways which were not communist.

So you fell into the trap of seeing yourself as administering, of pursuing a social democratic type of approach?

José But we did make that mistake, which was partly conditioned by the way we emerged out of Franco's dictatorship when we were forced to be very careful. You remember in 1981 there was an attempted coup d'état. This caution was very justified. But there was another component in it, a certain strategic view of moderation, in the right-wing sense, as being a way to overcome difficulties. We have to change a lot of things in ourselves, but we have to keep the essence of our nature, of being the ones who want to radically transform our societies. And for doing that we need other contributions which do not come from the workers' movement tradition, or from marxist roots.

This is where the new movements come in. These movements are not, I would say, a 'sector' asking for certain demands, involving certain sectors of the population; they are general political movements wanting general political changes. That's what the peace movement is in the sense of making demands of society in that field. This is what the ecology movement is, what women and anti-sexist movements are. They deal with contradictions – sex oppression, individual relationships, environment, militarism – which are not, either in the marxist tradition or in the history of the workers' movement, seen as essential points; but these contradictions are something which we cannot avoid addressing ourselves to; understanding these movements is a necessary part of being a radical, in the good sense of the term, transforming, providing an alternative to the current situation. But we also have a duty, at the same time, to say that no alternative can be built without the marxist and the workers' movement tradition. And we have to insist on that in the face of those who want to build alternatives to the new movements, apart from, and belligerent towards, the workers' movement and the communist, or marxist, tradition. Our duty is trying to build together, not just in organisational terms, but in political terms, a new alternative of the Left for the current times. This is the idea behind what we are trying to do with the Izquierda Unida, the United Left. It is not just a coalition for the elections, although there are tendencies which think of it simply in electoral terms. It aims to be a strategic process of building – in society and not just in parliament – an alternative, joining together several sensibilities.

Luciana I think we must all be

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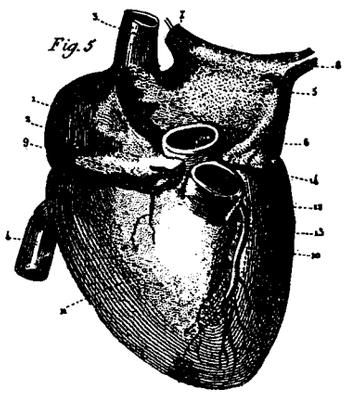

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careful when we talk about the working class. Because our experience in Italy in the last election was that by saying that the traditional role of the working class was more limited and its size was reduced, the Italian Communist Party paid too little attention to the working class and its struggle. In the election we lost exactly the working class. Our losses were in the working class suburbs. We have to bear this in mind, because we haven't in recent years, generated sufficient politics and struggles on these issues. I don't want to appear traditionalist, but I think this is a danger we have to keep in mind.

But now I want to come to the movements. I think it's true what José said, that we have new movements which are raising new demands and expressing new contradictions, that these contradictions and demands require a much more radical change than the change which has been sought not only by social democrats but by communist parties as well. When you take the question of ecology, or the women question, to solve these problems you need a tremendously radical change in society, in its values and its structures, a change which goes much deeper than the sort of change which has occurred in the Soviet Union, and which we have thought about. And it's true what José was saying, that the approaches of our parties tended to be to think that we should get more support by being more moderate. We didn't really realise that there was something totally new appearing in society, new demands were coming out, which required radical policies. That is all true.

But I also feel something else. There was an understanding of these new movements in my party, certainly in recent times, but how did we respond to this? We became very tolerant. And now we have a party which in some ways resembles a rainbow coalition. We have women who have their own demands, have their own culture, their own politics, who are apart in the party. We have the greens in our party. We have gays, we have whatever you want, and everybody is very tolerant about that. But what happens is a fragmentation of the culture of the party and of its politics and we were somehow subordinate to all this. There is a great danger that this fragmentation will go on. Because the problem was of course to understand the new culture, new demands and new contradictions, but also to be able to make a synthesis of these, to renew ourselves and then to have a project, an adequate project, for transformation. Instead those different pieces of the party did not interrelate one with the other. So you had a piece of the party which remained very traditional, and then those coalitions. This is the problem of the Communist Party today.

José: 'We have to change a lot of things in ourselves'

European Communist Parties At The Polls

France		Sweden		Italy		Netherlands	
1958	19.2%	1948	6.3%	1946	18.9%	1946	10.6%
1962	21.8%	1952	4.3%	1948	31.0%	1948	7.7%
1967	22.5%	1956	5.0%	1953	22.6%	1952	6.2%
1968	20.0%	1958	3.4%	1958	22.7%	1956	4.7%
1973	21.4%	1960	4.5%	1963	25.3%	1959	2.4%
1978	20.6%	1964	5.2%	1968	26.9%	1963	2.8%
1981	16.1%	1968	3.0%	1972	27.2%	1967	3.6%
1986	9.7%	1970	4.8%	1976	34.4%	1971	3.9%
		1973	5.3%	1979	30.4%	1972	4.5%
Spain		1976	4.8%	1983	29.9%	1977	1.7%
1977	9.3%	1979	5.6%	1987	26.6%	1981	2.1%
1979	10.8%	1982	5.6%			1982	1.8%
1982	4.1%	1985	5.4%			1986	0.6%
1986	4.6%						

1 Bloc with Socialists
2 United Left slate

Sources: 'World Atlas of Elections' by Dick Leonard and Richard Natkiel (Economist Publications Ltd, London 1986).

Not just in Italy either.

Luciana No, although I can see it very clearly in Italy. This is a great problem. How do we renew our thinking and how do we renew marxism by this? How do we renew our project? Because otherwise what we do is just transform ourselves into a rainbow coalition. Again I don't think this is a danger only for communist parties. What's going on in the SPD is rather the same as what is happening in our party. And we will not even solve the problem of the working class, because we think of the problem of the working class in a very traditional way and we do not understand that the working class is female or male – the contradiction is within the working class as well. The problem of ecology is inside production and not outside of production, and so it is the same problem again, and so on.

But because of our history and tradition I think we are better equipped to solve these problems. First of all because we come from a tradition which has in mind the necessity of radical change in society, so we are better equipped to understand the radicalism of these new demands. But the second thing is that we have a role which poses the question of how to put together the tradition of the working class, the labour movement, with those new events and phenomena. And if we don't succeed in putting these things together, well, then we can give up being communists. We may be a progressive coalition but that's all.

One of the questions we have to face is how do we reach into the new sections of the working class? The transformation in the nature of production, the developments of the computer age and new technology, are dispersing some of the old major sectors of industrial concentration and creating new workers and new smaller industries, where the old traditions, the old collective consciousness and culture don't apply. How do we engage with that problem?

Luciana The main problem is that we have lost control over the process of production. What has happened is that we no longer have the power to control what's going on. That was the strength of the unions. We knew what to do in the traditional terms. We don't know what to do now, with the new technology, the new decentralisation of production and so on. So we have lost this power of control and we have lost the confidence of those who were involved.

Have we got ideas on how to regain it?

Luciana This is a very difficult question. We immediately arrive at one problem which is that you can no longer control the processes just by controlling the plant, but you have to control the financial and economic processes which underlie it. But how do you do this? You cannot do it simply by traditional trade union action. But nor can you do it through parliament, because parliament doesn't control anything. So the question is how you establish new forms of control and of bargaining. The bargaining area has spread much more, you have a much larger area of bargaining and this is a question, of course, of developing a new culture in the working class itself.

Marcus These new types of workers, which are largely in services, in hi-tech etc, cannot usually be appealed to in an old-fashioned social and economic way. But they have no fundamental democratic rights in the places where they work. They have the political rights that everybody has, but they have no control. Their fundamental democratic rights are lacking in this process in which they are so significant. My

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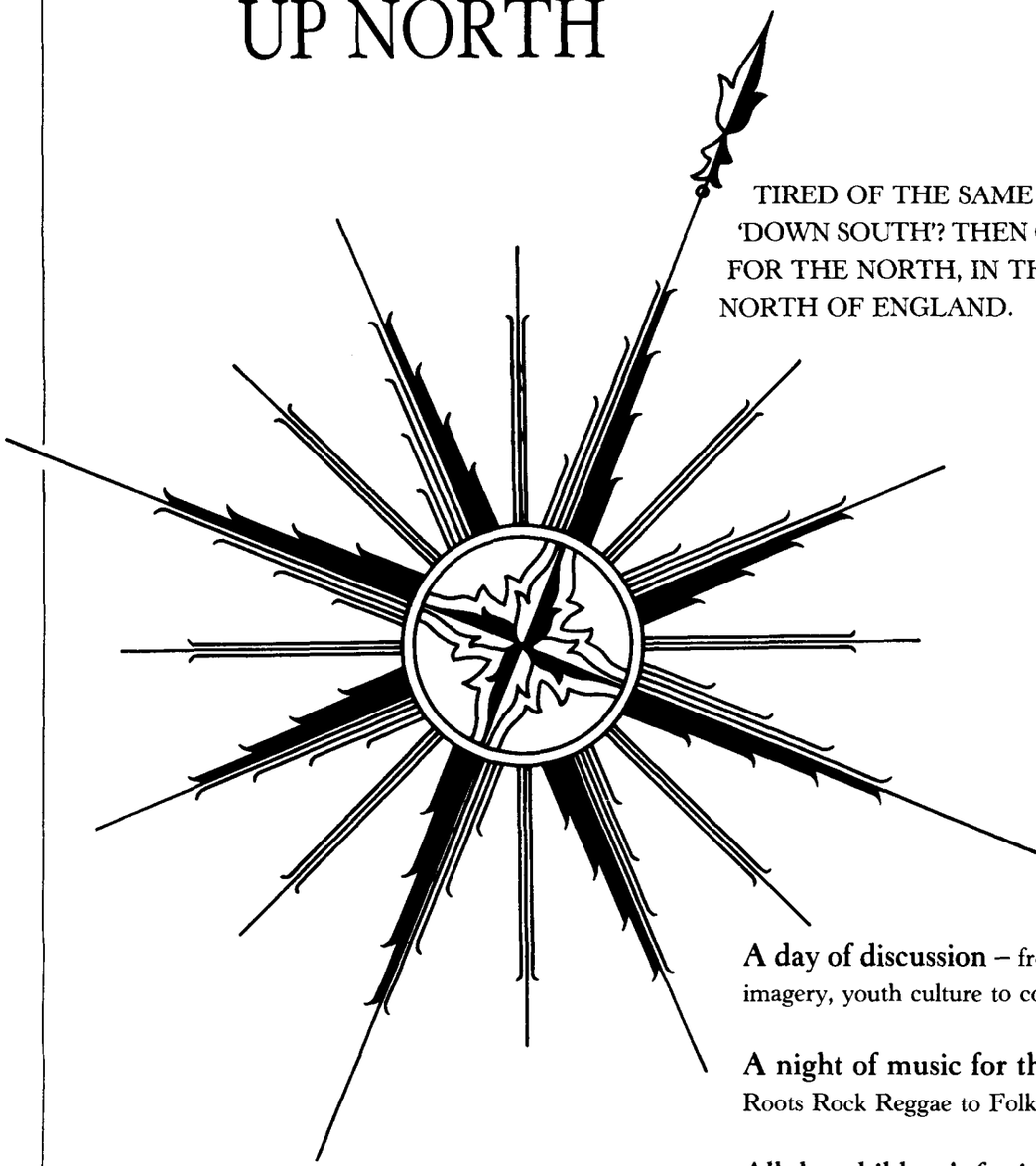

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opinion is that, thinking about democracy, about new forms of democratic control, about new organs in the enterprises and linked with the enterprises, will be one of the main tasks of communists.

But isn't this a bit abstract for many workers? In Britain the Left has said some of those things for a long time. But the Right has come along and said, 'We'll give you 500 shares'. And to a lot of workers that makes more sense than the fairly abstract idea of participation.

Marcus You have always had the problem that you must educate workers in a political sense. Communist parties are fundamentally educators. So when you see that there's a problem there you have to set yourself the task of educating working people in thinking about their rights and their non-rights, their lack of power, which is decisive.

How do you feel generally about the process that's occurring under Gorbachev? How do you estimate it? Are you all positive towards it? For example will it undermine the previous positions of the PCI, that the possibilities for renewal in the socialist counties have been exhausted?

Luciana We are glad about what has happened. It proved that our criticisms were right, first of all, and yours as well. But I have to admit that what is happening in the Soviet Union was to a certain extent unexpected because we didn't believe change of the dimension we are seeing would take place.

Marcus We lost our confidence.

Luciana Probably. None of us expected a phenomenon like Gorbachev. And here we were wrong. We were too pessimistic. And I think we should admit it.

What contribution can the Left and the peace movement in Western Europe make to the process? Clearly it surprised us, but also clearly, it's not necessarily irreversible. How it will develop is a political matter that isn't only of internal concern to the Soviet Union but must be effected by international developments. What responsiblity can we take for that?

José I think it is irreversible. That doesn't mean that the speed can't be slowed. That could happen. But there is something irreversible there because they are not just changing official positions about problems. They are really changing ways of acting. People are talking more freely than before, they are starting to speak freely. They are getting democratic and participative habits. Inside the party and in society, on the streets, this is visible.

But your point is, how is it going to affect the international situation, and what is the relation between that and the European Left? In terms of the peace movement, and steps towards disarmament and so on, the results are evident. But there is a point in the new Soviet thinking which is particularly important when we are speaking about the European Left. They say now – and they put an emphasis on the fact – that there is an interrelationship and an interdependence of world problems; they cannot solve their internal problems without keeping in mind a global solution, global phenomena. This means they are thinking about world alliances. And this is relevant to us, because although we need a certain European framework, a European framework is not enough to solve all the problems because some are worldwide. This has to do especially with the Third World, and with the relationship with the Soviet Union also. Are we going to propose a certain new alliance between the Third World, Soviet Union and Europe counterposed to the monopolistic international power led by the United States? Or are we going to propose something else? I don't have an answer to this. But I do think that the positions of the Soviet Union now allow the European Left to discuss issues with them as partners and to find, perhaps not common, but at least mutually respected responses. Not in terms of the revolutionary front led by anyone, but in terms of Soviets and Europeans discussing together solutions for the world.●

Gudrun: 'In the 80s people react differently to political parties'

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TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION

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Illustration: Ivan Allen

Front Page Spies

It is the distinctive mark of an authoritarian government that it claims greater power than it needs, and comes thereby to need still more to muzzle and repress those who protest its aggrandisements. Mrs Thatcher's first government seemed high-handed; her second vindictive. Her third is draconian in its pursuit of opposition.

I have just read *Spycatcher*, a book brought legally into the country without let or hindrance. Were this magazine to print my views of what it claims, or the legal controversy about it now discussed in open court in far-off Australia, it could attract the full weight of the law. Indeed a majority of the law lords briefly suggested that the ban would apply to the proceedings of parliament also, to end our most venerable bastion of free speech.

Letters from the Attorney General have gone to the *News on Sunday*, and even the *Sunday Telegraph*, which published hostile and belittling reviews of the Wright allegations. And one Hogg, Assistant Treasury Solicitor, wrote to the chairman of Pearson suggesting that he could stop publication of 'Spycatcher' in the USA since he had 'the power... to remove the directors of the American subsidiary'. He was firmly sent packing by Viscount Blakenham.

The book was published. All the world knows that it contains allegations of extensive and prolonged operations against both Wilson and Heath in the 70s, tucked away among the unmasking of agents and counter agents, and the shadow of suspicion about Sir Roger Hollis. Where these matters are discussed in the output of Harry Chapman Pincher they are in the public domain, although Wright was his source. It is Wright's own work that gets the writs.

That he has enraged some of his former colleagues and made others secretly envious is undoubted. He has blown some serving MI5 officers, and provided chapter and verse about his and their tradecraft. That is not very honourable. His reply would be that he was not treated decently either, cut loose on a minute pension, from a service which seems to have the haziest contracts of employment. Some of his superiors have never written a word, will not even now discuss the operations of 50 years past.

Others, in the secret war being waged within the agencies, have no scruples in leaking selected scares and smears to journalists. Wright has broken the rules because he has put his name to what would otherwise be speculation and innuendo.

There is a plain duty to discuss his allegations. In the wake of the law lords' ruling and the blank pages in the press, the split bulletins on ITN look more like the censorship of a state of emergency than the media of a country with a properly elected government. British newspapers and television woke up feeling like the *Rand Daily Mail*. In the United States, the response to similar allegations about the de-stabilisation of a president, or of illegal behaviour, would attract legal involvement in support of an enquiry – not to suppress it.

The judges have made a crass error. One of the three assenters, Lord Brandon, joined the majority having earlier said to counsel: 'You want to impose the kind of censorship the Soviet government imposes ... not a very happy picture at all.' But he then went on to impose a censorship harsher than the British government had proposed. The judges have been told by every newspaper in Fleet Street, and by Lords Scarman and Denning, just how wrong they are.

It is no good waiting for the last recourse to the European Court, or for that wider public outrage in the non-chattering classes to appear. Editors and proprietors must make common cause, whatever the penalties – even if it means sharing a cell with Captain Maxwell. *Spycatcher* has the notoriety of samizdat, the box-office appeal of Le Carré, all thanks to the government. Rational argument about its allegations should be aired here, as everywhere else. It is, after all, our system of government which was allegedly put at risk by a band of paranoid cowboys who thought they knew better than the electorate. Now we have a Government which thinks it knows better than the electorate too. 'A government which pursues secret aims or which operates in greater secrecy than the effective conduct of its proper functions requires,' Lord Franks wrote, 'will lose the trust of the people.' It has. In the heart of the Wright saga a great wrong lies embedded. The first duty of the press now, long after its 'secrets' have been filed away in every intelligence agency around the world, is to treat us as a citizen body, and not a cowed and lumpen mass. And the first duty of parliamentarians who love liberty is to establish an identified and accountable security system instead of a footloose mafia.●

Phillip Whitehead

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Cosmopolitan Comes Of Age

With a monthly circulation of over 360,000 *Cosmopolitan* occupies a very special place in women's magazines as both mainstream and feminist. Below, Janice Winship talks to the editor, Linda Kelsey, about *Cosmo's* view of the world.

***Cosmopolitan* was launched in 1972 on the back of the permissiveness of the 1960s. Was *Cosmo*'s impact in the early 70s to push other magazines, even the likes of *Woman* and *Woman's Own*, into discussing women's sexuality in a way that they just hadn't dared to before?**

Yes, very much so. But what's happened over the years is that because sex is no longer a taboo subject, we don't have to sell ourselves through the message of sex nearly as much as we did.

Don't you think though that sex meant much more than just selling the message of sex in that period? It was the means through which *Cosmo* explored women's independence?

Yes, it was a demonstration of independence and of not being a male chattel and it was a means of expression that women hadn't been allowed before, or not publicly been allowed to acknowledge. *Cosmopolitan* was very much about that. Things have shifted again because of AIDS. There is a new conservatism about sex which *Cosmopolitan* has to address itself to, but even though we are going back, because there is a new kind of repression, it is an equal male/female repression that is not necessarily going to be at the expense of women. On the other hand it is probably women who will take more of the responsibility, as they always do.

The *Cosmo* girl, the 'sexually liberated' woman, gradually evolved into the independent woman. After *Cosmo*, several other magazines addressed to the independent woman appeared: *Over 21*, *Company*, *Options*, *Woman's World*, more recently *Working Woman* and *Elle*.

Yes, but I don't think that any of the magazines have been as radical as *Cosmo*. They have taken on some of the issues, health issues for example, but none of them have taken the issue of work and careers at all seriously. Nobody else has really taken on board the idea that economic independence is the root from which all other freedoms spring. If you don't have that economic independence you're relying on other people to support you, and generally speaking that other person is going to be a man.

It's very important that *Cosmopolitan* helps women to build up their careers. It doesn't mean that we are encouraging all women to go out and be executives or chairmen of the board, that's not the approach.

It is still a fairly middle-class and professional approach though.

We are a middle-class magazine and I don't make any apologies for that. A magazine has to find its market and address that market. It can never be all things to all people.

So do you have a sense of who your core reader is and what they're interested in?

She is probably 25, single, a working woman, living in one of the major cities of Britain. She is interested in her job and she's interested in looking good. She's interested in health, she's interested in fashion and she's interested in men. She probably expects to get married and have children but not necessarily straight away.

More than other magazines *Cosmo* is a magazine to read rather than to look at. If you cut out the ads from *Cosmo* there isn't a lot of space devoted to visuals.

Yes, the majority of readers spend between two and five hours reading the magazine every month, which astonishes me. That's an awful long time to spend on one magazine.

What other factors account for *Cosmo*'s success?

Value for money certainly, but I think it succeeds because it addresses very basic things that women are interested in. Probably the most basic before work is emotions. Emotions have become somehow unfashionable in the 80s and that's why people say: 'Oh that's a very 70s magazine'. It's not fashionable to talk about me and us and how you feel, but women are very interested in those subjects and they are never not going to be.

In the last year we have perhaps put even slightly more emphasis on those areas, not necessarily male/female relationships; it could be about girlfriends, colleagues at work, parents, kids.

But you still have more on heterosexual relationships in one way or another, don't you?

Yes, we do, and again I suppose it's because we are a mainstream magazine trying to appeal to the most people at any one time.

In its early days *Cosmo* wasn't feminist and then in the late 70s it did 'come out' feminist in a certain way.

Yes, there was a *Cosmo* feminist creed which was very different from the *Spare Rib* feminist creed.

Can you spell that out?

Well, it's quite hard. I would define *Cosmo*'s feminism as about justice for all women but working within the existing framework of society, trying to improve the existing system, rather than trying to create a whole new society based on entirely different values.

We say you are an individual and as an individual there is an awful lot that you can achieve. But I don't think that precludes sisterhood. The whole *raison d'etre* of our courses that we run is to get women together discussing their problems, because a lot of those women might be working in mostly male environments so they never really get a chance to discuss those things with other women.

The women's movement as such doesn't really exist in the way it did in the 70s. How has *Cosmo*'s feminism changed in what some have described as a period of post-feminism?

Cosmopolitan approach

I really object to that term 'post-feminism' because it suggests to people that we no longer need feminism and I think we are still fairly pre-feminist. Most women do not like the word feminist or feminism at all. I think it's a good word that describes something that women should be aspiring to but it is very off-putting to the majority of women. There is a streak of feminism that runs through everything we

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print whether it's the films we review, or the books we review.

There is an underlying feminism in all of that. We just don't use the word as often as we probably would have done even two years ago, but we are just as radical as we were. I believe our readers are quite open to ideas and we can really get them going. For instance, Jenny Lecoat wrote an article for us this summer called 'No Conservative Sex for Me', and I've never had such a barrage of letters.

That's very interesting because one of the characteristics of all women's magazines is their

hesitancy about aligning with a party.

We try not to be party political. I don't thing it's *Cosmo*'s function to be party political but we can be very women political and it's quite evident that Maggie Thatcher has done nothing, other than the fact that she's female, to help women in this country, so I feel quite justified even within a non-political magazine to run articles that come out against her. As far as Jenny Lecoat is concerned, she is a columnist who readers expect to be slightly more outrageous than the rest of the magazine. We've had a lot of letters from readers saying: 'How dare you print that kind of rubbish'. Some of them were very angry indeed, threatening to cancel their subscriptions, but I also got quite a lot of letters saying that it was the best article they've ever read in their lives.

I thought the article was also significant because it made that link between your personal politics – feminism and how you relate to men – and party politics. Women's magazines don't usually make that connection in such an explicit way whereas a magazine like *Spare Rib* would.

Where *Cosmo* also differs from *Spare Rib* and *Everywoman* and *Women's Review* – and this seems to me to be one of *Cosmo*'s strengths – is that it often approaches women's issues also as men's issues. Whereas *Spare Rib* would always have a woman writing about rape or child sexual abuse and berate men if you like, you often get men themselves to write on these subjects. Is that partly about trying to address men or is it trying to bring into the public domain what often goes on in private between men and women?

Yes, we are trying to encourage a dialogue because you're not going to get through to very many women if you remove men from the picture. A magazine like *Spare Rib* tries to create a society which has very little to do with men, though maybe they are changing slightly now, and that's not how most people live. We have something like 25% male readership. I'm quite sure that a man will read his girlfriend's or his wife's copies and he may read an article which is about him and that says something about men in general and that will lead into a conversation between him and his partner about the issues, which perhaps they wouldn't have ever gotten around to discussing. Even if he says: 'What's all this rubbish!' at least it opens up some sort of dialogue.

Can you characterise the *Cosmo* man?

I haven't really met him.

Well, that's an interesting confession!

Well, I do know a few but they're very few and far between.

One of the most influential magazines of the 1980s has been *The Face* and the youth/style sector more generally. Those magazines are different in how they use graphic design but also in terms of the kind of sensibility which that design partly constructs. In part they construct a view of the world on the margins of yuppie Britain, at the same time as they are deeply embedded in consumer and media culture.

Many of the young magazines have picked up on some of those visual codes. Even *Spare Rib* had somebody from *The Face* for their redesign. Yet *Cosmo* does not draw on any of that new visual rhetoric.

I find these magazines interesting about style but – and this sounds corny – we're about contents. Those magazines present a very simple view of the world. They address issues but they don't get involved in them. *Cosmo* is a magazine that gets incredibly involved, very passionate about the issues it discusses. *Cosmo* is a caring magazine, and that's where the accusations of being old fashioned come in.

Is it also though that *Cosmo* is much more centrally involved in mainstream culture and your design reflects that? While there's something about those style magazines that foregrounds unemployment, the fact is that some people are poor and that there's a black and Asian culture in Britain.

We do tackle some of those issues. Last year we ran a special conference for black and Asian readers. Now that was quite a brave step for us and we consulted a lot of pals as to whether we would be seen to be patronising, because we are a magazine produced by white middle-class people.

How is *Cosmo* facing the future?

It's particularly hard at the moment. The new materialism, and a yuppie culture that is very selfish indeed, is completely sweeping the nation. The magazine has to keep up with the pace, keep up with the times. How can we be current but avoid falling into that trap which we basically disapprove of? It's sometimes quite hard to achieve this balance.●

Tough At The Top

League football is back with us and, a few weeks from now, the first League club manager will be fired and the first 'Bell's Whisky Managers of the Month' will be announced to the enthusiastic endorsement of tv pundits. League football will dominate the sports pages of the national daily press for six days of most weeks and the central figure of most stories will be the club manager: Smith is 'doing a great job' at, say, Sheffield United, who are unbeaten; the 'pressure is on' Jones at Plymouth, still bottom and without a win; Brown, at West Bromwich, is reported to have had a showdown with his unsettled striker . . .

By the season's end some of these managers will, according to the fortunes of their teams, be signing new, lucrative contracts with their clubs; boarding planes for Spain, Turkey or the United Arab Emirates; or scratching around for work as coaches, scouts, salesmen . . . On the face of it, the social world of the football manager seems to be one of the most cruel and irrational pockets of the 'enterprise culture'. How can we make sense of this world?

There wasn't, of course, always such a thing as 'football management'. The early professional clubs of the late 19th century were run unambiguously by their boards of directors, who handled, among other things, the recruitment and payment of players and week by week selection of teams. As professional football grew, however, club secretaries began to be given a bigger role – travelling to watch prospective players, signing them, negotiating with them and generally acting as go-between for board and players. They were now usually given the title of 'secretary-manager', but their executive power was nil.

Nevertheless, even in this

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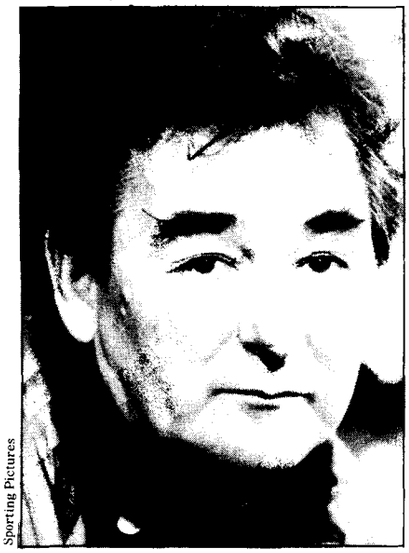
embryonic period of football managers, the notion that the managerial figure might pay for the club's financial and/or playing failure with his job – now the central fact of a football manager's existence – was already becoming established. Arsenal, for instance, got through four secretary-managers in quick succession around the turn of the century, during which period they failed to attract substantial crowds to their ground in Plumstead. And, in 1912, the Nottingham Forest committee moved quickly to appoint a manager, having the previous year been summoned before an angry public meeting to account for the club's relegation to Division Two. There were glimpses, too, of the manager in his more contemporary characterisation as Architect of Victory – notably in the case of Ernest Mangnall, praised by the local press for the successes of Manchester United in the early 1900s.



Sporting Pictures

Football's highest profile?

But it was really only between the wars that the idea of the football manager as tactician and team builder began, even in a small way, to take root. Most secretary-managers wore suits and hats, involved themselves in the movement of players in and out of the club and pinned up the team sheet on a Friday lunchtime. But they saw little of the players and seldom told them how to play. One or two managers – in particular Herbert Chapman (at Huddersfield and Arsenal) and Frank Buckley (at Blackpool and Wolverhampton) went further. Appreciating that football was now emphatically a business like any other, they sought, in Chapman's phrase, to 'organise victory'.

Football reporters now felt free to chastise clubs where there was no manager or where the existing one was a powerless clerk: why, they asked, didn't the muddlers and meddlers of the boardroom make way for a professional manager who knew what he was doing? Moreover, during the 1930s, a mystique had been woven around the football managers. They began to be seen as canny wheeler-dealers, hanging furtively around railway platforms or hotel lobbies, waiting to conclude secret business. Whether trying to sell each other players with undisclosed injuries or vices, or attempting to con the parents of gifted young footballers into surrendering their offspring to a football apprenticeship, managers were now always assumed to have a trick or two up their sleeves.

After the second world war, the football manager gradually became a technocrat, largely through the influence of Walter Winterbottom who was appointed the first England team manager in 1946. As England manager, Winterbottom was either ignored or derided by Fleet street columnists, some of whom liked to portray him as a 'boffin' chalking on a blackboard, while the England players sniggered behind their hands. But, through his very popular coaching courses, Winterbottom strengthened the claims of managers to be *experts*. By the mid-1960s, through the rapid turnover in football jobs, many club managers were 'Winterbottom men', out at the training ground working on tactics with their players.

Press treatment of the League game, meanwhile, tended more than ever to equate the progress of clubs with the performance of their managers. More and more great team makers were thrust forward to stand alongside Chapman in the football managers' hall of fame. Football managers were now widely known. Most people in the late 1960s knew who Matt Busby was, or Bill Shankly, or Don Revie, whereas practically nobody outside their respective communities would have known who had managed Manchester United before Busby, Liverpool before Shankly or Leeds United before Revie.

Since the 1970s, the football manager, now a technocrat with autonomy in playing matters, has had a further dimension added to his job: publicity. This has generally implied 'forging links' with local organisations, giving talks, making personal appearances and supplying the escalating needs of a copy-hungry press corps – including the mandatory post-match press conference, which provides material for most Monday morning football stories. The leading football managers of the last 15 years have, like the politicians, been judged increasingly on their image – their ability to get themselves and their players regular, celebratory coverage on the sports pages, to attract camera crews, maybe to get work on tv providing expert commentary.

Accordingly, the game has thrown up many garrulous, publicity-wise managers – Tommy Docherty, Malcolm Allison, Brian Clough, John Bond, Ron Atkinson – who have found themselves living the strange life of the living news item, their professional affairs on the back page, their extra-marital ones on the front. They may even, as Tottenham Hotspur manager David Pleat did a few months ago, fall foul of that most dismal of double acts, the prostitute and the popular press; the *Sun* on June 29 accused him of paying a woman for sexual services in the Luton Town car park.

But what does it all mean? Sports culture in the late 20th century is, as we know, intensely competitive and individualistic. It requires winners but it also, in many contexts, requires Svengalis. The role of the coach/Svengali figure is greatly amplified by television: cameras follow basketball coaches into team huddles during time out, registering every passionate instruction about *off*ence and *de*fence; at Wimbledon they search the crowd for people with whom players have lately been working on their game, and so on. In the case of League football, more than most other sports, they provide a conveniently simple, individualistic explanation for situations, the real causes of which are structural.

The truth is that most League football clubs have been losing money and facing rising costs since the 1950s. For over 30 years they have been losing spectators – especially in the industrial towns of the North – and, for another, their costs rose with abolition in 1961 of the professional footballers' maximum wage ceiling. Between 1945 and 1975, clubs like Doncaster Rovers, Darlington, Workington Town, Crewe Alexandra, Grimsby Town and Hartlepool United got through a dozen managers. During the same 30 year period, over 800 managers left their clubs, most of them dismissed. Today few, if any, posts in football management are safe and many clubs which until the 1970s had a minimal turnover in managers have felt that, at times, only a change of management could rekindle the necessary public interest: a boost in seasonal ticket sales, for example, is often triggered by the appointment of a new manager.

Similarly, at the other end of the spectrum, success on the field can bring, for the fortunate few, telephone calls from club proprietors in other parts of the world offering six-figure salaries. Not very long ago, for example, Everton supporters were calling for the dismissal of the club's manager Howard Kendall. Now, with Everton

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having twice won the League championship under his management, he is to manage Bilbao who have promised to make him a millionaire by 1990. For the Kendalls of this world, here is proof of the Thatcherite promise that hard work and talent bring success and its rewards.

But such success stories do no more than mask the alienation of both occupations. Football management is a remarkably solitary way to earn a living, however intermittently lucrative it may be. The manager distances himself from his players, his directors, other managers, the press and the public – although he deals with them all. Much of his time is spent driving up and down motorways. When results are bad, he is abused in the street. Managers and their families are prone to nervous strain. Spare a thought this season's eve for John Moore, who resigned in June from the managership of Luton Town having seen the club through the most successful season in its history. 'I was isolated as a manager' he said. 'I did not want the job to change me or affect my family life. Enjoyment and personal satisfaction come first'. Quite a number of managers would, I suspect, go along with that, but Thatcherism, despite its famed reverence for the family, has no interest in such people.

Moore, like Colin Harvey the new manager of Everton, enjoys working with the players and doesn't relish the public accountability that goes with football management. In practice, that means that the Harveys and the Moores don't like too much contact with the popular press. Various factors, though, have combined to produce the myth of the football manager as witch doctor. This myth has been sustained by all parties involved – press, employers, players, public and the managers themselves. The myth is impossible to live *to* and almost impossible to live *with*, so now is as good a time as any to attack it.●

Stephen Wagg

Soviet Posters Of The Silent Cinema is an exhibition showing at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford until October 18.

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The poster above is by the artist A I Naimor, produced for the film *Bella Donna* in 1923.

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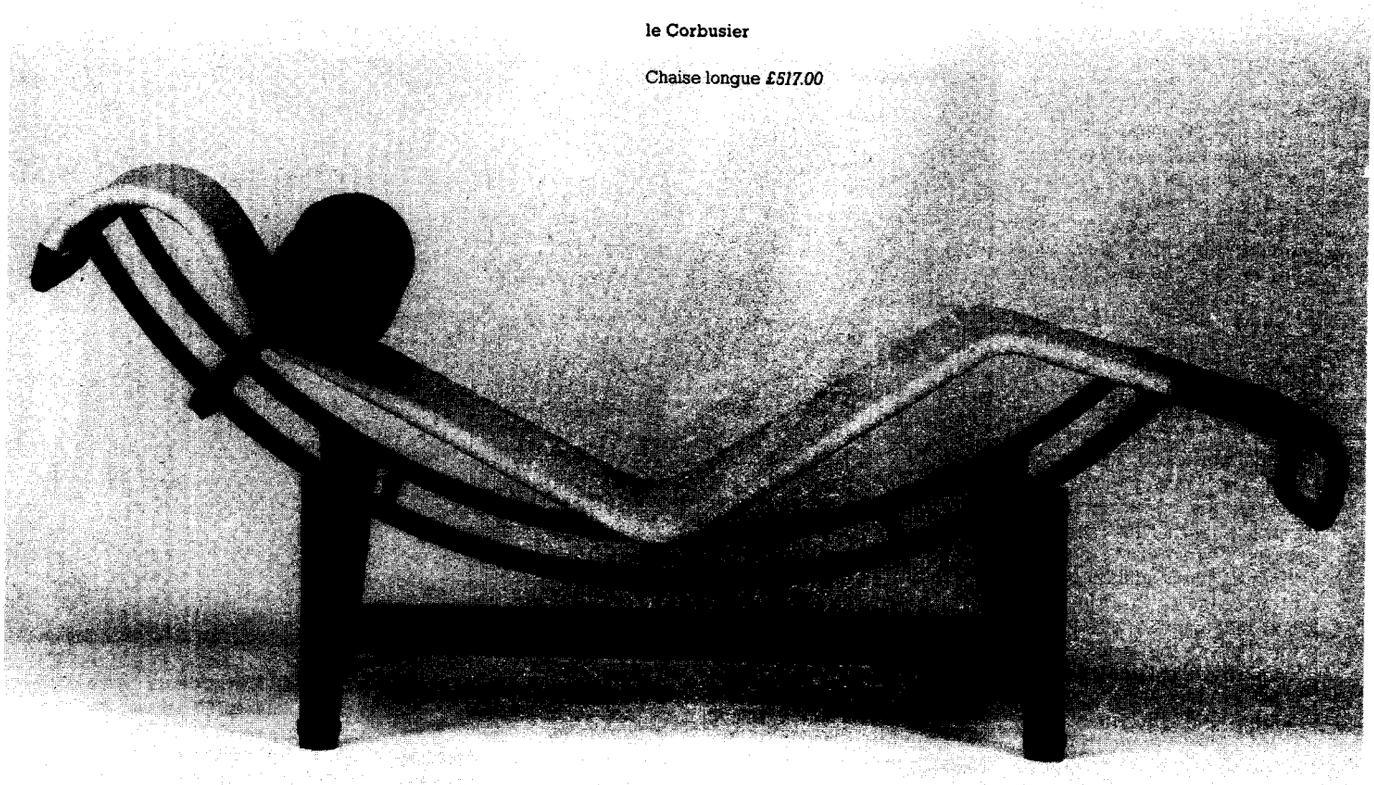

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Toys for the boys in *Hope and Glory*

Hope And Glory

In the midst of the current spate of conscience-torn US war dramas – *Platoon, Hamburger Hill, Full Metal Jacket* – John Boorman taps politely at the door with a traditional British home front second world war melodrama. While Cambodia and Vietnam stir up ideological complexity, the war which raged in Europe from September 3, 1939 was perhaps the last 'honest' battle. A war fought with relatively clear consciences on the part of the allies, it provides a reasonably cosy, if exciting, space in which Boorman can situate a nine-year-old's view of wartorn London surburbia, with dad at the battlefront, sis dating a Canadian soldier, and mum trying to hold everything together.

Hope and Glory is, above all else, massively autobiographical. Produced, directed and written by Boorman, it is unashamedly about his own boyhood, with a script approved by all living members of his family, and starring his daughter Katrine and son Charley in bit parts. The resultant intimacy, and stress on remembered period detail, steer the film perilously close to British tv costume drama, with its memories of Britain's greatness.

Attempts to blunt the rosy glow of nostalgia – such as monochrome sequences to suggest the blurring of real memories and period movies, and the horror of returning home from the seaside to find the house a heap of rubble – cannot overcome the presiding details of long, hot summer days, closed schools, the fun of collecting shrapnel, learning to bowl a googly, or drawing stocking-seam lines on the legs of his older sister.

Despite all the deprivation and sense of loss, Boorman can easily move his homeless characters to a middle-class Thameside rural retreat, where bees hum and his grandfather teaches him to fish and play cricket. Such is the extent of the introduction of the theme of 'the new emergent middle-classes'.

Whatever else one holds against the film, it has a warmth and humour to the relationships and some rather good ensemble acting. ●

Martin Sutton

Garvey's World Vision

This year is the centenary of the birth of Marcus Garvey, the black leader whose significance in the history of the struggle for freedom, both in the African continent and in the diaspora, would be difficult to over-estimate. To quote CLR James, 'for me Garvey was the beginning . . . Garvey was the first man to make black people aware of themselves as an international force . . . he basically made blacks part of world history . . . where Pan-Africa develops, it will turn to Garvey to find its place in the world'.

Marcus Garvey was born on August 17, 1887, in rural peasant Jamaica. In 1909, he left Jamaica for the first time to visit Costa Rica. He worked as a timekeeper on a banana plantation, and for the first time saw the plight of black workers.

In 1914, he returned to Jamaica to form The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).

Garvey's plans for the economic improvement of black people began to materialise, too. In 1919, the UNIA established both the Negro Factories Corporation and the Black Star Shipping Line.

The combination of colonial pressure and mismanagement soon heralded the collapse of the Black Star Line in 1922. This was a strange paradox, because, by 1922, it was estimated that Garvey had a following of 11 million people. There were branches of the UNIA in countries as diverse as Wales, South Africa and Australia.

The following year, Garvey was charged with using the mail to defraud, when a UNIA member sent out old leaflets advertising Black Star Line stock for sale. In 1925, he was sentenced to five years in a US jail, in what is now recognised to have been a fixed trial.

After protests, he was deported to Jamaica in 1927. In 1929 he launched the People's Political Party. The platform of this party, very largely, was the basis on which the self-government movement was launched eight years later. And it was this movement that eventually won independence for Jamaica in 1962. Some of his detractors suggest that he was himself trapped in the white world's agenda. But Garvey never made any secret of his view that the ancient civilisations of Africa in the Nile Valley were the source of energy for all humanity. The whites therefore had no monopoly on social organisation, intellectual ordering of experience, cultural products of the imagination, or the administration of power.

Garvey spent his life challenging one of the basic canons of western thought – that one set of people is incapable of advancing humanity without the civilising assistance of another. To challenge this involves finding ways for black people to repossess themselves.

Garveyism is about the individual and national struggle against failure. At the beginning of the 20th century Garvey was aware that black people were the captives of failure, oppression and self-denial. He gave them a vision of success encapsulated in the idea that they were connected to a long and vital history and that slavery was a mere interruption. He knew then that in order for black people to survive and have dignity, they needed a continental base like all the other great nations. Garvey then began his campaign to liberate occupied Africa in order to build a power base that would make black people strong throughout the world.

As black youth in the Caribbean, America, England, Brazil, Australia and elsewhere find themselves on the fringes of their world, excluded by racism and poverty, a fresh grappling with Garvey's ideas and his vision will show that failure is not endemic to the race and that success is within reach. ●

Tony Sewell

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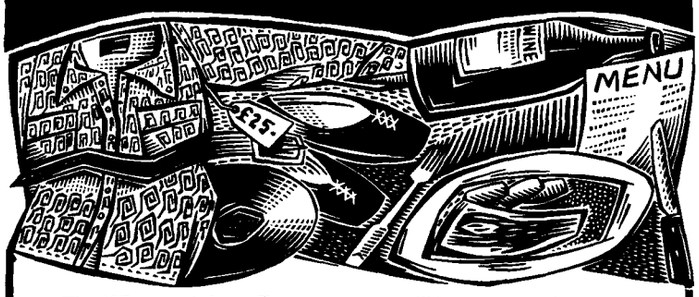

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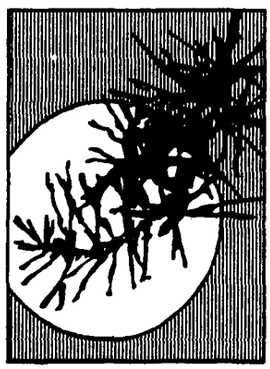

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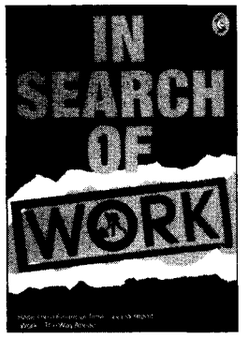

Pessimism Of The Intellects

In Search of Work
Charles Leadbeater and John Lloyd
Penguin Books £3.95 pbk

Ever since the industrial revolution, people have been debating the nature and future of work.

In recent years, under the impact of mass unemployment and technological change, the debate has acquired a new intensity and importance. Entrenched beliefs have been shaken by events and there is now widespread uncertainty, not to say confusion, about the long-term future of work.

Part of the confusion is because certain apparently well-established trends have been reversed or halted since the onset of the economic depression in 1973.

For example, back in the 60s it was widely believed that small firms would gradually be squeezed out and that employment would be increasingly concentrated in large firms. In recent years, however, this process has gone into reverse. Many large firms are shedding labour and it is relatively small firms which are providing most of the new jobs.

This development may be simply a once-and-for-all shake out by large firms, in which case it will be temporary and the previous trend towards concentration of employment will resume at some time in the future. On the other hand, it may be the result of fundamental shifts in the organisation of production and the structure of output, in which case the importance of large firms as providers of employment will gradually decline and the labour market will be increasingly dominated by small firms.

It is debatable which of these two extremes is closer to the truth, but, whatever the answer, it is clearly of immense political and social significance. Although there are many exceptions, small firms are normally worse employers than large ones. Wages are typically lower. Job security is less and they are extremely difficult for unions to organise. If the new trend is permanent, as seems likely in the UK at least, the result will be increasing income inequality and a growing under-class of insecure and impoverished workers.

Even where future economic trends are clear, their ultimate economic and social consequences are frequently obscure. For example, lifetime hours of paid employment for males have been falling for well over a century and the pace of decline has accelerated in recent decades. In purely numerical terms, paid employment is becoming a marginal part of men's lives. Paradoxically, for women the opposite is occurring as they are being increasingly drawn into the labour market and abandoning their former role as full-time housewives.

It is against this background that Charles Leadbeater and John Lloyd have written their new book **In Search of Work.** This book, which is based on a study commissioned by the *Financial Times*, seeks to provide a general survey of work and its future in advanced capitalist economics, and to guide the reader through the complexities of contemporary debate on this topic. Among the areas covered are: the decline of industrial employment and the growing importance of services; new technology and its effects on skills and employment; the increasing participation of women in paid work and the associated increase in part-time employment; new divisions in the work force – between the employed and the unemployed, and also between a privileged 'core' in stable well-paid jobs and the growing 'periphery' in low-paid, insecure forms of employment.

It also deals with new forms of industrial organisation, such as the recent growth in importance of small firms and contracting-out by large firms and, finally, the rise of Japanese-style industrial relations in Western Europe.

In addition the book examines how these developments are likely to offend the trade union movement.

In discussing these topics, the authors make use of conventional academic and official material. However, they also make use of a special *Financial Times* jobs survey together with extensive personal interviews with managers, trade unionists and government officials in many different countries. The inclusion of this additional material lends the book immediacy which is often lacking in conventional academic studies, and the result is both easy to read and highly informative. As a general guide, this is an excellent book. Especially good are the chapters dealing with skills, new technology and core-periphery developments.

However, the book does have some serious weaknesses. It is based almost exclusively on the experience of the 'big six' capitalist countries: France, Germany, Italy, Japan, USA and the UK. There is virtually nothing on the smaller European economies, whose experiences in recent years have often been quite different from that of the large countries. For example, some of the Scandinavian countries – Finland, Sweden and Norway – have an extremely good record in employment and have kept unemployment down fairly successfully during the past decade.

Moreover, they all have highly regulated labour markets, relatively equalitarian income distributions and in all of them trade union membership has risen strongly during this period. Yet these are all advanced countries subject to the same basic economic forces which in the big six have been accompanied by deregulation of labour markets, growing inequality and declining trade unions.

The Scandinavian experience indicates that such developments are not an inevitable feature of modern capitalism, and can be prevented, or even reversed, under appropriate conditions. Unfortunately, by concentrating only on the big six, Leadbeater and Lloyd give the impression that these developments are both universal and inevitable, and their general response seems to be one of fatalistic resignation.

The only exception concerns new technology, the impact of which on skills is ambiguous and, as they correctly point out, depends on the allocation of power in the labour market. However, even here there is an undertone of pessimism and the impression is given that little can be done to alter this allocation of power.

The closing words of the book are as follows: 'The social democratic philosophy of the postwar era, which was based on the time of employment for all who wanted it, is no longer practicable. The societies that are now facing widespread unemployment must construct a new consensus, founded on fresh policies that address the challenges posed by the world of work that will increasingly be characterised by formal inequalities but may be complemented by informal opportunities for those who are not part of the labour force.'

This, in my view, is pure defeatism. The meaning of full employment has certainly changed in recent decades, and its achievement in the UK is a considerable challenge. But it can be done, as the examples of Scandinavia in the west and the GDR and the Soviet Union in the east indicate. For the Left to abandon this goal would be an abdication of responsibility. If we do not fight for it, then who will?●

Bob Rowthorn

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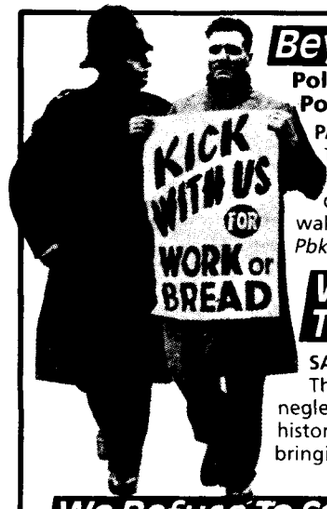

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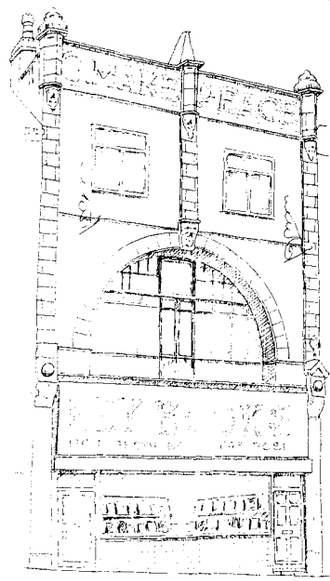

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Fragments Of A Revolution

The Tiger's Milk
Adriana Angel and Fiona Mackintosh
Virago £8.95 pbk

For women, revolutions can mean at least three things: new possibilities and programmes for emancipation, sharper conflict with established male authority as part of the revolutionary process and a bitter postponement or loss of new freedoms because of opposition to that revolution.

Some of this complex reality is reflected in **The Tiger's Milk** *(Virago £8.95 pbk)*, a collection of 25 'testimonials' accompanied by photographs and a comprehensive introduction by Hermione Harris. With a few exceptions, the speakers are broadly pro-Sandinista but certainly not uncritical in their support. Almost all women, they are drawn from a variety of backgrounds and include landless peasants, nurses, former domestic workers, along with militants of the revolution.

Despite a diversity of background and, in some cases, opposed interests, these women share childhoods of extreme poverty. Almost all have witnessed scenes of class violence, whether at the hands of Somoza's national guards or through the brutal licence of local landowners. As women, too, there are commonalities in their experiences, of illtreatment by men and hardships endured as a result of social and economic marginalisation.

Together, these accounts show how much the Nicaraguan revolution has affected women's lives, but, at the same time, how little it has yet been able to deliver in material terms, and how minimal has been its challenge to the powerfully entrenched practices and structures that subordinate women.

In post-revolutionary Nicaragua there is still domestic violence, sexual harassment, machismo, back-street abortions and male alcoholism. Women, often single parents, are still preoccupied with feeding their children in conditions of great scarcity, and many eke out a living on the economic margins. In part, thanks to US hostility, there is a lack of even basic medical supplies. One woman had a caesarian operation without an anaesthetic, recovered without antibiotics, and then lost the baby because the incubator was not working for want of spare parts.

For many of the women represented in this book, the changes introduced since 1979 have a political and personal significance which offset the deprivation of the present. For those who participated in the overthrow of the Somoza regime, and who were themselves subject to its systematised violence, there were immediate gains – the wonder of success, the security of personal safety restored, and a new vision and possibility of creating an alternative way of living, without hardship and with increased co-operation and solidarity.

Some of these hopes have been realised, albeit in a piecemeal manner, and it is those who put most in that are the most optimistic for the future. But there is some bitterness about the situation of women even among the most committed: one interviewee sees the revolution as having been made by men for men, and others express impatience at the slow pace of reform on issues, such as abortion, relating to women. Even a Miskito woman complains that neither women's issues nor women themselves have any real place in *ethnic* politics. Predictably, perhaps, the radical transformation of many women's lives over the last seven years has brought in train a more politicised and acute confrontation with men. Some women have preferred to live without them, expressing relief at their increased realm of freedom, despite the large numbers of children they have to care for alone.

We have here, then, some visual and verbal fragments of a few people's lives. This is not a comprehensive collection of views, but it is a rich one, and it is one which explains the meaning of the Nicaraguan revolution to the people who are participating in it.●

Maxine Molyneux

Instruments and Ideals

Why don't teachers teach like they used to?
Rachel Pinder
Hilary Shipman £6.95 pbk
The Comprehensive Experiment
David Reynolds and Michael Sullivan
Falmer Press £7.95 pbk
Two-Track Training
Cynthia Cockburn
MacMillan Education £7.95 pbk

There is no doubt that many parents are worried by their perception of what their children are learning: for example, 'progressive' methods in primary schools. The attacks on 'progressive' education have continued since the black papers of the 60s. The new teaching methods were based on the sensible idea that children learn best from *doing* rather than *listening*. In practice, motivated (and often middle-class) children gain greatly while less motivated children and those in need of a closely structured environment lose out.

Rachel Pinder, in **Why don't teachers teach like they used to?** makes a strong case for progressive primary education. However, the trouble with her excellent book is that it does not make allowance for the background, education, training and outlook of many primary teachers. A generation ago, the Left's attack on the concept of innate intelligence produced an understanding of the educability of children. Teacher training has now reversed this trend, and we are back to teachers who believe in innate intelligence and therefore child-centred learning. Genuine progressive educational methods do not work in the hands of teachers with such beliefs.

This book is worth reading for a clear exposition of the progressive case. For energetic and enthusiastic teachers it also provides advice and guidance. In the concern to counteract the worst of Baker's Law, progressive education, of whatever kind, will have a hard fight to survive: knowledge and skills certainly are the backbone of most people's perception of what schooling is for. Modern society also requires its citizens to have autonomy, so that they can take part in democratic processes and not be tools of corrupt mass media. It also needs a pedagogy based on the educability of all children – not part of Baker's curriculum.

There is little to be gained by reading **The Comprehensive Experiment** by *David Reynolds and Michael Sullivan*. Its comparison of selective and comprehensive schools is based on one small community in a particular situation and could in no way be extrapolated to general experience of comprehensives.

One effect of family background, years of schooling and the influence of the dominant culture is that, by the age of 16, young people have absorbed what society expects of them. Hence girls mainly choose to go for training and jobs in those occupations traditionally reserved for women. Men and their trade unions make sure that these are lower paid – that there is a differential. In **Two-Track Training** *Cynthia Cockburn* examines what training (YTS) offers young women, and why. Her very able and informative summary is supplemented by a detailed study, by interview, of a group of boys and girls in training as well as officials concerned with the schemes. To anyone interested in how women come to have lower paid jobs than men, this book is highly recommended. ●

Keith Ebbutt

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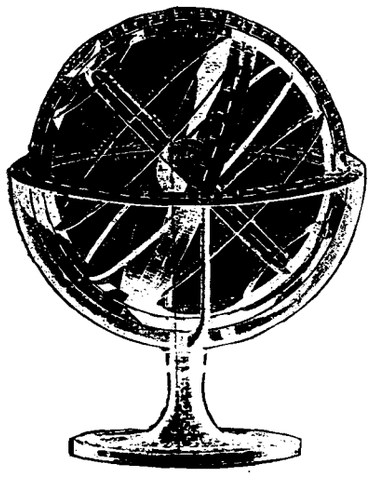

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Unequal Value

Women are far more likely than men to be poor. But 'the feminisation of poverty' is nothing new, according to *Caroline Glendinning* and *Jane Millar*, editors of **Women and Poverty in Britain** *(Wheatsheaf Books, £8.95)*. Women's poverty is both historic and fundamental, arising from the sexual division of labour which 'marginalises women's involvement in the labour market while at the same time assigning little or no value to their caring and domestic work within the family.'

The contributions which make up this book illustrate the causes and costs of women's poverty. Women's lives are still characterised by financial dependency – on husbands, on state benefits, on a small range of low paid and insecure jobs, and on whatever credit can be obtained from shopping check companies and loan sharks.

The myth that dependency *protects* women underlies most of welfare and labour market policy. State benefits are structured on a family model in which women are dependents, and few women have the advantage of occupational benefits. Women's access to training is poor, and where it occurs they are still pushed into traditonal low waged and 'casual' sectors.

'Liberal-reformist' policies to promote equal opportunities pose little challenge to the institutionalised poverty of women. They assume that if the opportunities are available, women can compete on an equal basis with men. They do not tackle the sexual division of labour in the home, in which women continue to bear a major responsibility for caring and domestic work. Nor do they provide the services and financial help which would enable women to take up opportunities – such as daycare facilities and adequate child benefit.

Today those policies that have enabled women to achieve some measure of financial independence are under threat. Local support services are being cut back. Child benefit is threatened, new tests are reducing women's entitlement to other benefits, and employment protections are being scrapped.

This book is a good resource for understanding women's poverty, and provides some useful ammunition for women to fight back. ●

Emma MacLennan

Not Dead Yet

It was an inspired notion to commission a book to chart and celebrate the history of 'other' theatre. With a government determined to stamp out any oppositional culture, the cultural resistance movement needs a reminder of its past achievements and of the importance of its present struggle to survive. **Other Theatres: The Development of Alternative and Experimental Theatre in Britain** by *Andrew Davies (Macmillan Education £6.95)* seems set to do all these things. Up to 1945, it's a readable account of alternative theatre, though dependent on second hand information.

However, after 1945, there is little to celebrate. Joan Littlewood's glorious nights in the theatre are overshadowed by the problems of her success. The more recent the history, the blacker the misery. The final pages reveal that the author thinks he's writing not only the history but also the obituary of all alternative theatre in Britain!

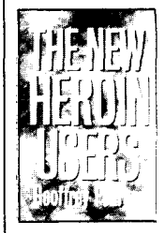
Happily, the text reveals little evidence that Andrew Davies has seen any actual shows; or has much knowlege of the way theatre works. His doom-laden thesis is even further invalidated by grotesque inaccuracies in his account of recent events. 80% of the 'facts' cited here, of which I have knowledge, are wrong. It would be more than a pity if this book became a standard work on the subject of alternative theatre.

It adopts a defeatist academic perspective on struggles which are still being fought. It should please the Arts Council, but does a deep disservice to those engaged in alternative theatre, and to those audiences all over Britain who are certainly there wanting something only live theatre can give them – a voice for their resistance to Thatcherite values.

This summer, Glasgow Citizen's Theatre was packed to capacity – not for the RSC's appropriation of the Fringe, but for 7:84 and Wildcat. Next year the largest commercial theatre in Scotland will have a 20-week season from the same companies. In 1984/5, 7:84 England played to audiences of thousands per night with *Six Men Of Dorset* and *Garden of England*, before they were cut off by Rees-Mogg. None of these facts are cited.

His ignorance and dependence on secondary sources have led Mr Davies to think he is writing an obituary. Speaking as the corpse, I can happily report that 'Other Theatres' are alive and well and looking forward to the next announcement of their demise. ●

John McGrath



Bad Habits

The New Heroin Users by *Geoffrey Pearson (Blackwell £17.50)* is a useful guide to part of Britain's heroin problem.

The author, provides concise, valuable information and dispels myths. Only some people are susceptible to heroin. People are always introduced to it through a friend or relative. Heroin attracts because it is a means of sharing an enjoyable experience and offers a lifestyle involving risk and excitement.

The book shows how the young heroin users graduate from social enjoyment to the terrible problems involved in raising money to feed their addiction. Nearly all street dealers are addicts themselves, paying for the drugs they need by thieving, prostitution and, above all, pyramid selling.

Pearson also shows up the inconsistencies and absurdities of present treatments, which depend largely on the beliefs and prejudices of the local consultant psychiatrist. Although a few areas have flexible policies, most offer nothing except rapid reduction and counselling (much despised by most addicts). This sometimes helps the newly-addicted and those who are ready to give up the habit, but it leads the others into a recurring cycle of detoxification and relapse – and to further pyramid selling to 'friends'.

Several messages stand out in this book. One is that the situation is 'so bad that the headline writers of Fleet Street simply would not have the literary command to describe how bad it is'.

Another is that instead of whisking addicts away from their homes and communities for expensive 'treatment', we need to devise forms of help that are accessible in their immediate neighbourhoods. ●

Ann Dally

Strong Language

Chris Weedon's **Feminist Practice and Post-structuralist Theory** *(Blackwell £22.50)* is a wonderfully clear outline of the major developments in contemporary feminist thought and theory.

Weedon argues that to reject theory – as many radical feminists have done – is not helpful; what we need is a theory which is personally and politically useful to us as women. The aim is to show that post-structuralism offers the best basis from which to develop such a theory.

Post-structuralism offers theories of the relation between language, subjectivity, social organisation and power, and therefore spans many disciplines, from structural linguistics to political theory.

There are important differences between various forms of post-structuralism, but what they share is a common emphasis on language as the place where forms of social organisation are defined and contested and as the place where our sense of self is constructed. Weedon adopts a form of post-structuralism which follows Althusserian marxism in its rejection of liberal humanism and makes the primary assumption that it is language that enables us to think, speak and give meaning to the world around us.

This may sound rather abstract, but Weedon uses practical, everyday examples to explain each new theoretical point, thus conveying sometimes very complex ideas in a clear and accessible form, making the book a delight to read.

She is at all times concerned to relate post-structuralist theory to feminist practice. For example, Foucault's theory that knowledge brings with it the possibility of power is used by Weedon to explain why it is so important that women understand the assumptions underlying gynaecological practices, and why Wendy Savage received so much support among women for her policy to allow women to participate in decisions about birth.

The really impressive thing about this book is that Weedon not only explains theoretical debates with style and clarity, but also conveys a clear sense of their importance to feminist practice. ●

Judith Squires

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Stand And Deliver

The image of Labour conjured up by analysts of the election is of a party supported by the failures of Mrs Thatcher's new order: Labour is the party of the declining North, of unskilled and public sector workers, of council tenants and welfare recipients. Far more skilled manual workers and subaltern white collar workers vote Conservative than Labour. Prosperity and a growing population in the South, the growth of owner occupation, and privatisation, all confine Labour to shrinking regional and social bases of support.

Such gloomy sociological predictions depend on a highly questionable assumption: that there is a natural affinity between certain classes of voters and a particular political party. This assumption is not a new one; it used to be made by the Left. The largest class, the workers, would naturally support the party of labour. Now it is seen to favour the Right: the affluent and successful, manual workers included, will naturally support the party that rewards individual initiative.

However, the character of this 'natural affinity' is far from clear. It cannot be a simple perception by voters of their place in the occupational structure or status hierarchy. One would expect the university educated to cluster at the upper end of the occupational ladder and the unemployed to cluster towards the bottom. Yet only 34% of the university educated voted for Mrs Thatcher in 1987, while 32% of the unemployed voted Tory in 1983. If voters do try to follow their own interests in identifying with parties, then those interests cannot simply be read-off from their occupational or status position. Rather it is a matter of perceptions of parties' positions in relation to one's conception of one's interests. Few people have a single and unambiguous 'interest' – occupation, housing tenure, geographical location, religion, ethnicity, etc, can conflict with and counteract one another, even from the standpoint of that abstraction of electoral sociology, the rational calculating agent. People have to invent their interests and in doing so they take note of what political parties say. *A* campaign will seldom transform voters' perceptions of their interests, but a long period of political campaigning and argument *can* do. If there were a rigid natural affinity between occupational classes and parties, how would one explain the shift of many skilled manual workers from Labour to the Tories?

There is comfort and heartache for Labour here.

Policies and images do matter in voters' perceptions of parties. But Labour's policy image frightens off many skilled manual and white-collar workers. Such workers tend to vote Conservative instrumentally. That is, they have no fixed ideological identification with Toryism, rather they perceive Conservative government as best for their living standards. They have perhaps voted Labour in the past on that same calculation.

The problem is that in 1987, despite a brilliant campaign and a jump in Neil Kinnock's personal popularity, Labour could not do other than project a relatively negative policy image. It said the economy was in a worse state than paypacket or shopping centre experience seemed to confirm. It was explicit in seeking a modest redistribution of national income from the employed to the unemployed, from the private to the public sector, and from the private to the public sector, and from current consumption to investment. These policies are inevitable for any party posing a serious challenge to Conservatism and seeking to undo the economic damage its policies have done.

Today workers in the South have good reason to believe that 'you've never had it so good', and to feel less threatened by unemployment. This response is neither merely cynical nor greedy; it is how all the parties have been telling the voters to react for the last 30 years. Labour, through the 50s and the 60s, helped to promote the image of a full-employment economy with steadily rising real wages. Affluent working-class voters in the South are voting Conservative to keep their own substitute for that economy going at the expense of the North and its unemployed. Far from there being a natural affinity between Conservatism and the southern affluent worker, there is a calculating marriage of convenience.

How to encourage a divorce? Certainly not by overemphasising the ideological affinity and loyalty of a large part of the Tories' 42% of the vote. Thatcher's majority is a ramshackle coalition. Its survival owes a great deal to continued prosperity, to Labour's failure to present itself as a credible party of government, and to the incoherence and aimlessness of the Alliance. 1987 was less a victory founded on Conservative ideological skill than a win by default. Labour had made itself fit to campaign but had not convinced the voters it was fit to govern. Given the choice, voters may well have preferred a more centrist and accommodating Toryism, but that choice was not available. Voters can only choose between a small number of parties, warts and all. To vote Conservative is not to endorse every relentless policy and obsessional act of Mrs Thatcher.

Voters choose a party rather than its detailed policy programme. In doing so, very few of them have an articulate political outlook. A large portion of the electorate respond as family-centered and instrumental consumers rather than as political agents. Activists have to get used to the idea that the electorate are not like them. Goldthorpe is a better guide in this terrain than Gramsci. David Lockwood and John Goldthorpe in *The Affluent Worker* demonstrated a tendency for workers to judge politics and parties apolitically, in terms of the expected benefits to themselves and their families. We have to recognise that prioritising private consumption and individual choice in life and leisure are not phenomena of the Thatcher years but stem back at least to the postwar boom. Bryan Gould, in emphasising our need to appeal to voters as individualists, to recognise a radical shift in expectations about politics, is thus merely echoing a long established theme.

It is one that Labour has to accept rather than resent. As consumers, affluent working-class voters expect a government to promote both private economic success *and* to provide necessary collective services. They will not accept the latter at the price of the former. It is distrust of Labour's capacity to deliver economic success that has been crippling. Enough voters, just, believed Harold Wilson in 1964. In 1991 we have to convince them again, and to overcome the perception that the Labour governments of 1974-79 presided over a period of economic chaos. But to do that we need policies that will promote growth and transform manufacturing investment and performance, not merely transfer income away from those who feel they have earned it to those they feel do not deserve it. Any other policy amounts to a caring Thatcherism, a contradiction in terms. We need to develop such policies. If we do not we are condemned to trying to equal the Conservatives' concessions to the affluent workers in order to win them back. That is a game we shall lose.●

Paul Hirst

'Today, workers in the South have good reason to believe that "you've never had it so good," and to feel less threatened by unemployment'

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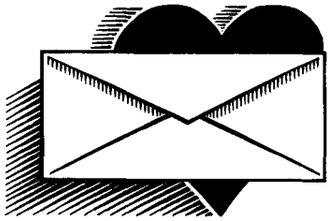

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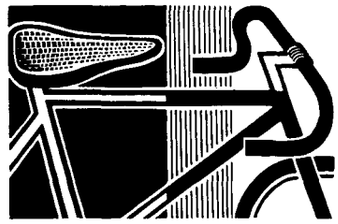

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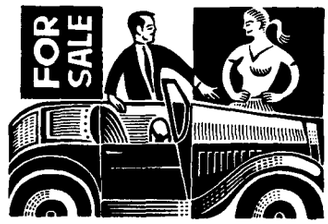

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Ayatollah Khomeini

Ayatollah Khomeini, who was born in 1902, comes from the small town of Khomayn, about 60 miles south west of Tehran. His family had long-standing links with the religious hierarchy of Shi'a Islam and with religious intellectual life in Iran.

Though his father was murdered by persons connected with local landowning interests, the young Ruhullah Khomeini was sent to Arak and, later, to Qom to study Islamic doctrine and sciences. The incipient confrontation between religion and state in Iran had begun as European colonial interest in Iran quickened – because of oil – at the start of the century. It became the dominant theme in political life during the period that Khomeini was in Qom because of the rise to power of the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, Reza Shah. Reza Shah was determined to replicate the reforms achieved by Kemel Ataturk in Turkey and to destroy the central role played by Islam and the Shi'a clergy in Iranian life – in education, law and social values.

Meanwhile, Ruhullah Khomeini built up a considerable reputation as a teacher in Islamic ethics and philosophy. In 1941, he gave the first concrete evidence of his political consciousness in a short book, called *The Unveiling of Secrets*. In this study, Khomeini attacked Reza Shah as a usurper, the legislature as illegitimate and the authorities as arrogant and uncaring – all because of their refusal to accept the overriding moral precepts of Islam. He did not, however, attack the concept of monarchy as innately un-Islamic, only its incumbent for failing to consult the ulama, the religious jurists and leaders whose approval of the secular order would have legitimised it in muslim eyes.

It was only in 1962 that Ayatollah Khomeini – by then generally considered eminent enough for this honorific title – began to articulate his real political sentiments. They were provoked, first, by a new electoral law which would have permitted women and non-muslims to stand for municipal office. These proposals he condemned as anti-Islamic.

In 1963, the government proposed extensive land reforms – opposed by the religious hierarchy led by Khomeini on the grounds that the reforms were a fraud and a cover for satisfying foreign interests in Iran. The protest culminated in the destruction of a famous religious centre in Qom by the authorities and an open attack by Khomeini on the Shah. The speech led to his arrest.

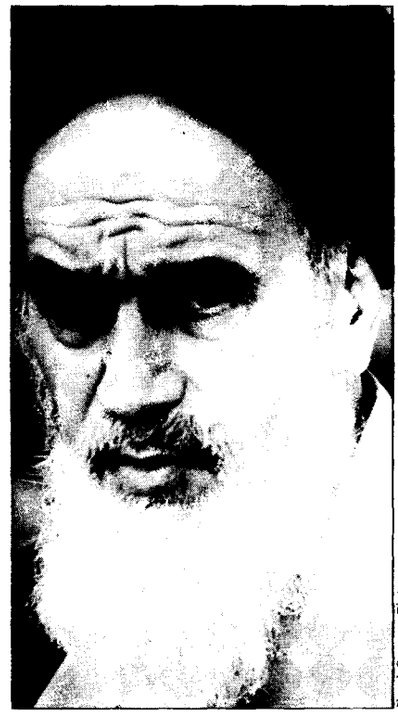
Release did not buy silence, however, and the Ayatollah was soon busy attacking the Shah's government for its secularism and links with the West. He sought national independence for Iran in the context of a government guided by Islamic principle in which the clergy would play an exemplary role but in which there would also be a constitutional role for the Shah. This apparent compromise, however, was soon ousted by a new crisis, when the Iranian government introduced a law providing diplomatic immunity for US military personnel and their dependents in Iran. Khomeini denounced the law as an attack on Iranian sovereignty and national integrity and, amid widespread popular demonstrations of support, he was arrested and bundled into exile in Bursa in Turkey in November 1964.

The following year he was allowed to move to the great Shi'a shrine of Najaf, in southern Iraq, where he was to stay until 1978. There he refined his religious and political ideas, now abandoning any thought of compromise with the Pahlavi dynasty and seeking a religious government, as described in his 1969 lecture series and published under the title of Hukumat-i Islami (Islamic government).

By the late 1970s, Ayatollah Khomeini was the dominant influence in Iran opposed to the Shah, despite his exile, and Iran asked the Saddam Hussain government to expel him. The Iraqi authorities, already anxious over the growing politicisation of their own Shi'a populations, were happy to oblige.

Ayatollah Khomeini retired to France from where he masterminded the growing violence and revolutionary ferment. On returning to Tehran on February 1, 1979, he lost no time in destroying the remnants of the former regime and in constructing an Islamic government instead. Over the past eight years he has not deviated from this goal. With the passage of the Islamic constitution at the start of the 1980s, he saw the essential institutions of the new system in place: a parliament dominated by the clergy, an Islamic juridical council (the council of guardians) to vet legislation and himself as the supreme mentor and arbiter.

Yet the Iranian revolution is only half complete and the new Islamic structures often sit uncomfortably on top of the remnants of the previous regime. The formal structure of the state is paralleled by religious institutions, the infamous komitehs operated through the ministry of guidance and the vast network of mosques, and depending on the radicalism of the Hisbollahi (the Party of God – religious zealots) and the Pasdaran. Revolutionary Guards double as police and as armed militants for a regime in which they are seen as the Islamic alternative to the regular armed forces. Even these groups merely provide a cover for barely concealed differences between moderates and radicals, with the latter seeking far more radical change – land reform, nationalisation of trade and other economic sectors – but frustrated so far by the conservative Council of Guardians. The Ayatollah almost certainly sympathises with the Council, for his political radicalism does not extend to economic affairs in which he is conscious of the place accorded to private property in Islam. Yet, at the same time, it is Ayatollah Khomeini who sustains consensus among this mass of antagonistic, competing interests and it is his prestige that guarantees his ability to do so.



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Khomeini: Enigma

The Ayatollah's intense nationalism is the other driving force behind the regime, for it is this that sustains the rancorous determination to destroy the government of Saddam Hussain in Baghdad for its aggression against Iran in September 1980. It is subsumed into a vision of Iran as the embodiment of the Islamic political ideal and of the need to wage 'eternal war' to bring down the Ba'ath secularists in Iraq for having threatened that ideal. When Khomeini does disappear, the political tensions in Tehran will come to the surface as the various factions compete for power. Yet, even the victors will still have to pay service to the ideology that Ayatollah Khomeini has imposed in Iran: the hegemony of Islamic radicalism over Iranian society and state.●

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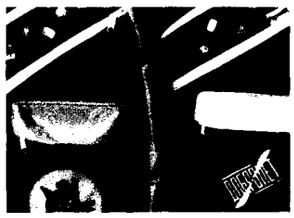

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